

FROM ANXIETY TO BOREDOM: HEIDEGGER, FREUD, AND THE EMOTIONAL
HISTORY OF SECULARIZATION

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Abstract

While anxiety has been chiefly researched in the field of psychopathology, the phenomenon of boredom has been explored more extensively by positive and existential psychologists, behaviorists, literary critics and historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophers. This disciplinary separation is both an expression of the difference between anxiety and boredom and a hindrance to the systematic study of this difference. This dissertation is an initial assessment of the significance and scope of this structural lacuna, conducted through the study of the intellectual history of the difference between anxiety and boredom. In particular, I show that Freud never worked out a theory of boredom because anxiety had been the implicit presupposition of his psychoanalytic psychology. I also demonstrate that due to the same rationale of mutual exclusion, Heidegger, who discussed both phenomena extensively, never considered them in juxtaposition. To explain the development of Freud's and Heidegger's thought, I draw a distinction between anxiety and boredom that is analogous to the distinction between fear and anxiety. While anxiety is fear without the perception of actual danger, boredom is anxiety without the experience of actual fear; and since there is no fear in boredom, there is no guilt in boredom. On the basis of these essential distinctions, I propose the historical hypothesis that there has been a transition from anxiety to boredom in late modernity and that this transition is the emotional aspect of the history of secularization. Thus the oft-observed and -commented upon phenomenon of the expansion of boredom is the direct product of the secularization of anxiety; and while boredom has expanded as a secularized, guiltless, and inherently non-pathological form of what used to be religious anxiety, anxiety has proliferated in the form of a diagnostic category in

psychopathological discourse. This latter process complements the former and is but another aspect of the history of secularization, which, in antithesis to the expansion of boredom, shows how guilt and the belief in the possibility of sin have persisted in secular forms.

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The Humanities Center at Johns Hopkins University is a unique enclave of negative entropy—aptly described as an “anomaly”—in the academic world where interdisciplinary research is made possible. Commitment to interdisciplinarity does not mean ignoring or dismissing disciplinary boundaries, but rather appreciating their significance, their historical and practical necessity, while nevertheless systematically prioritizing the demands of the subject matter and the research question over the demands that ensue from the arrangement of the sciences and the path-dependent nature of the institutional evolution of the modern educational system. Without such an appreciation, the notion of interdisciplinarity is empty, just like the freedom of indifference or whim. I am thus grateful to the Humanities Center for its true commitment to the values of interdisciplinarity and intellectual freedom; to Richard Macksey, its cofounder and longtime director; and again to Hent de Vries, its current director, who has fostered this institutional commitment, as well as an incredibly vibrant and stimulating scholarly atmosphere, making the Humanities Center what it is called and what it is. Without such a commitment, it would have been impossible to conduct this research, which engages with hermeneutic phenomenology, the history of psychiatry, and the sociology of religion and secularization. This work is therefore indebted, perhaps above all, to this institution.

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Abbreviations

In references to Heidegger's texts, the pagination of the published English translation is followed by the pagination of the original German work; the two are separated by a slash. The same order applies to texts by Kierkegaard and Freud when the pagination of the original work is given.

- BPP Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, vol. 18 of Standard Edition, 1-64 (London: Hogarth, 1955); translation by James Strachey of *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, vol. 13 of *Gesammelte Werke*, 3-59 (London: Imago, 1998).
- BT Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson of *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967).
- CA Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); translation by Reidar Thomte of *Begrebet Angest: En simpel psykologisk-paapegende Overveielse i Retning af det dogmatiske Problem om Arvesynden*, vol. 4 of *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, 309-461 (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Research Center, 1994-2012).
- DR Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); translation by Paul Patton of *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1968).
- DSM 4 American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV* (Washington: American Psychiatric Association, 1994).
- DSM 5 American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fifth Edition* (Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013).
- E Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 85-265. Further abbreviations: 1-5 (part number); d (definition; if positioned directly after digit); a (axiom); p (proposition); s (scholium); d (demonstration; if not positioned directly after digit); app (appendix); original language references are to Carl Gebhardt (ed.), *Spinoza Opera*, vol. 2. (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1925).

- FCM Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); translation by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker of *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit*, vol. 29/30 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2010).
- GA Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975ff.), 102 vols.
- GW Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* (London: Imago, 1940-1952), 17 vols.
- HCT Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); translation by Theodore Kisiel of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, vol. 20 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994).
- PT Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenology and Theology,” in *Pathmarks*, 39-54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); translation by James Hart and John Maraldo of “Phänomenologie und Theologie,” in *Wegmarken*, vol. 9 of *Gesamtausgabe*, 45-78 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2013).
- SE *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1956-1974), 24 vols.
- SKS *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter* (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Research Center, 1994-2012), 28 vols.
- WM Martin Heidegger, “What Is Metaphysics?” in *Pathmarks*, 82-96 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); translation by David Krell of “Was ist Metaphysik?” in *Wegmarken*, vol. 9 of *Gesamtausgabe*, 103-22 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2013).

Introduction

Anxiety and boredom appear to have little in common apart from the fact that they are both usually regarded as negative affects. When one thinks of anxiety, boredom does not necessarily come to mind, and when boredom is under consideration, anxiety does not necessarily present itself in its immediate semantic proximity. Indeed, these emotions have mostly been studied separately. While anxiety has been chiefly researched in the field of psychopathology, the phenomenon of boredom has been explored more extensively by literary critics and historians, positive and existential psychologists, behaviorists, sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophers.¹ This conceptual, theoretical, and disciplinary separation between anxiety and boredom creates the impression that these emotions belong to different realms of experience and discourse, and that they accordingly present us with different practical and theoretical problems. Those who are interested in anxiety have had to consider in which manner and to what extent it differs from such closely related mental states as fear, shock, trauma, panic, stress, worry, and apprehension; those interested in boredom have been primarily

¹ Elizabeth Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities: Boredom and Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Patricia Spacks, *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Sean Healy, *Boredom, Self, and Culture* (London: Associated University Press, 1984); Reinhard Kuhn, *The Demon of Noontide: Ennui in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Martina Kessel, *Langeweile: Zum Umgang mit Zeit und Gefühlen in Deutschland vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001); Peter Toohey, *Boredom: A Lively History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An introduction to Logotherapy* (New York: Pocket Books, 1984); Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: The Experience of Play in Work and Games* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975); D. E. Berlyne, *Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014 [1960]); Orrin E. Klapp, *Overload and Boredom: Essays on the Quality of Life in the Information Society* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1986); Anton Zijderveld, *On Clichés: The Supersedure of Meaning by Function in Modernity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); Yasmine Musharbash, "Boredom, Time, and Modernity: An Example from Aboriginal Australia," *American Anthropologist* 109, no. 2 (2007): 307-317; Michael Raposa, *Boredom and the Religious Imagination* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999); Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom*, trans. John Iron (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Jürgen Große, *Philosophie der Langeweile* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2008); Philipp Wüschner, *Die Entdeckung der Langeweile: Über eine subversive Laune der Philosophie* (Vienna: Turia und Kant, 2011).

concerned with the ways in which it is distinguishable from indifference, apathy, laziness, and depression. Since anxiety and boredom appear to have little in common, and since difference, as Gilles Deleuze argues, is commonly subordinated to similarity or identity, there has been little interest in the difference between these emotions.²

In this dissertation, I plan to show that nevertheless the difference between anxiety and boredom becomes interesting when examined from a broad interdisciplinary perspective. In particular, I argue that anxiety, which has gained wide currency as both a diagnostic category and a form of patient complaint in the field of mental health, and boredom, which has become increasingly prevalent in ordinary speech and everyday experience, are complementary phenomena, or, what amounts to the same thing, two aspects of a single phenomenon, namely, secularization. Much like production and consumption, the two economic aspects of capitalism, which differ so greatly both psychologically and phenomenologically that observers focusing on one have tended to overlook the other,³ anxiety and boredom are the two apparently contrasting aspects of the process of secularization, which is indissolubly related to the emergence of the capitalist economy and the ensuing differentiation between work and leisure, the

² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

³ With the famous exception of Thorstein Veblen's 1899 *Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), classical sociological accounts of capitalism such as those offered by Karl Marx and Max Weber focused mainly on production. The shift of focus to consumption is a relatively recent trend in sociology. Notable studies in this field include Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); George Ritzer, *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge, 2005); Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage, 1991); and, in the field of literary criticism, Rachel Bowlby, *Carried Away: The Invention of Modern Shopping* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000). The significance of boredom in this context has been recognized by sociologist of emotions Eva Illouz, who, drawing on Martha Nussbaum's philosophy of emotions, has identified boredom as a "background emotion" that is "structurally embedded in the culture of consumption." See Eva Illouz, "Emotions, Imagination and Consumption: A New Research Agenda," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 9, vol. 3 (2009): 389.

individual and the social, the private and the public, adulthood and childhood, normalcy and pathology.⁴

I further argue that despite the apparent contrast between boredom and anxiety, there is an important sense in which the difference between them is not wide but subtle. It is as subtle as the difference between anxiety and fear on the one hand, and the difference between boredom and depression on the other. It is for this reason that anxiety and boredom have been systematically, although mostly unwittingly, kept apart by those who have observed and written about these phenomena; namely, it is because, at the most fundamental psychological level, the only difference between anxiety and boredom is fear, a difference which, at the social level, is expressed in either the absence or presence of a sense of guilt. While anxiety, as Kierkegaard, Freud, and Heidegger have taught us, is fear in the absence of actual danger, boredom can be defined as anxiety in the absence of actual fear; and since there is no fear in boredom, there is no guilt in boredom, which is arguably the most important characteristic distinguishing boredom from clinical depression,⁵ while clinical depression and other mood disorders often remain

⁴ See Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, trans. Sarah Solovay and John Mueller (New York: Free Press, 1966), ch. 3; Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962); and Albert Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). According to Hirschman's model, once one is bored with one's private occupations (consumption), one becomes involved in public affairs.

⁵ One of the symptoms of major depressive disorder according to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013), 161 (henceforth DSM 5) is "[f]eelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt (which may be delusional) nearly every day (not merely self-reproach or guilt about being sick)." Likewise, Richard Bargdill distinguishes between chronic boredom and depression by emphasizing the fact that the participants of his study, all of whom reported feelings of being "bored with their life," are mostly "over-confident" and tend to "over-estimate their abilities." See Richard Bargdill, "The Study of Life Boredom," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 31, no. 2 (2000): 202. This goes all the way back to at least the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when melancholia was also frequently associated with guilt. See Stanley Jackson, "Acedia the Sin and Its Relationship to Sorrow and Melancholia," in *Culture and Depression: Studies in the Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder*, eds. Arthur Kleinman and Byron Good (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 44.

indistinguishable from anxiety disorders.⁶ To put it the other way around, anxiety is nothing but boredom to which an element of fear has been added. Just as anxiety can be mitigated through various concrete fears (such as phobias of darkness, public spaces, or death), boredom can be avoided, even in the absence of any imaginable threat, through the fear of or a sense of guilt about the experience of boredom itself.⁷

While these are broad claims, my dissertation is more restricted in that it examines certain historical developments in psychoanalysis and phenomenology with a focus on the writings of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). It is therefore primarily a study in intellectual history bringing together the works of two very different thinkers for whom the differentiation from the religious tradition was a

⁶ See David H. Barlow, *Anxiety and Its Disorders* (New York: Guilford Press, 2002), 61-2; Mark Zimmerman et al., “Frequency of Anxiety Disorders in Psychiatric Outpatients with Major Depressive Disorder,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 157, no. 8 (2000): 1337-1340; and Charles Van Valkenburg et al., “Anxious Depression: Clinical, Family History, and Naturalistic Outcome: Comparisons with Panic and Major Depressive Disorders,” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 6, no. 1 (1984): 67-82.

⁷ This is in keeping with the view that only through a feeling can a feeling be changed, among the proponents of which are (a) Spinoza (“An affect cannot be restrained or taken away except by an affect opposite to, and stronger than, the affect to be restrained”; “Affectus nec coerceri nec tolli potest, nisi per affectum contrarium et fortiolem affectu coercendo”); (b) Nietzsche (“The will to overcome an emotional affect is ultimately only the will of another emotional affect or of several other emotional affects”; “Der Wille, einen Affekt zu überwinden, ist zuletzt doch nur der Wille eines anderen oder mehrerer anderer Affekte”); and (c) Heidegger (“when we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood”; “Herr werden wir der Stimmung nie stimmungslos, sondern je aus einer Grundstimmung”). See Spinoza, *Ethics* (4p7) in *Benedict de Spinoza: The Ethics and Other Works*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton University Press, 1994), 204; *Ethica in Spinoza Opera*, ed. Carl Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1925), vol. 2, 214; hereafter E. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prologue to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Ian Johnston (Virginia: Richer Resources, 2009), §117, 77; *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (Leipzig: Naumann, 1886), 94. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927), trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001 [1962]), 175; *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2006), 136 (henceforth BT). More recently, Susan Feagin has discussed these problematics in terms of “meta-response” in “The Pleasures of Tragedy,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1983): 97. The problem of “feeling about feeling” has also been discussed by Sianne Ngai in *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10. Ngai’s consideration of this issue is in the context of introducing her intentionally paradoxical notion of “stuplimity,” which combines stupidity with the Kantian sublime (271ff.) and designates “the synthesis of boredom” with “shock” (9), “astonishment” (258), or “aesthetic awe” (8). The pertinent notion of the “autonomy of affect” has been advanced by Massumi under Spinozist-Deleuzian influences, but Massumi’s research agenda is surreptitiously anti-Spinozist in that it is biased toward the body and thus ignores the dictum that we “do not know what the body can do” (E3p2s) and the principle of parallelism—which arguably applies not only to the relation between the mind and the body but also to the relation between the mind, the body, and the affects. See Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 35.

major concern. But since (a) anxiety and boredom are far from purely intellectual concepts, (b) the influence of psychoanalytic and phenomenological thinking has extended far beyond academia, and (c) secularization is a social process, my main argument concerns patterns of thought that have direct practical implications and wider social significance.

I develop the argument in two stages corresponding to the two parts of this dissertation: “The Secularization of Kierkegaard’s Concept of Anxiety and the Transition from Anxiety to Boredom in Heidegger’s Thought” and “The Postulate of Anxiety in Freudian Theory.”

In the first part, I pursue the hypothesis that there has been a transition from anxiety to boredom in late modernity and that this transition is an outcome, or aspect, of the history of secularization. What is implied in this transition, I suggest, becomes explicit at a particular moment in the development of Heidegger’s thought. I thus begin my demonstration with Heidegger rather than Freud, in spite of the chronological priority of the latter, in order to first explain, at the most fundamental level, what is at stake in the transition from anxiety to boredom itself.

As is well known, anxiety (*Angst*) plays an important role in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*; 1927), where Heidegger regards it as a fundamental affectedness (*Grundbefindlichkeit*) of human existence (*Dasein*) through which the totality of the world, the individuality of the self, and the finite nature of time and existence are potentially disclosed. Some two years following the publication of *Being and Time*, as is less well known, Heidegger turned his attention to boredom (*Langeweile*), considering it in similar terms, this time as a “fundamental mood” (*Grundstimmung*) of philosophy, and

yielding one of the most extensive and systematic accounts of this phenomenon in the history of philosophy. This event took place in the form of a lecture course that Heidegger delivered at the University of Freiburg in the winter semester of 1929/30, entitled “The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Loneliness” (“Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit”).⁸ First published in 1983, this lecture course offers a painstaking, nearly 150-page-long analysis of the phenomenon of boredom in which anxiety is left undiscussed. In *Being and Time*, it is the concept of boredom which is not mentioned at all. This is the first piece of evidence I offer for consideration. Since Heidegger is one of the few authors who dealt extensively with both boredom and anxiety, he presents us with a unique opportunity to investigate the wider conceptual, theoretical, and disciplinary separation between these emotions.

The similarities between Heidegger’s accounts of anxiety and boredom are relatively clear.⁹ In both anxiety and boredom, that which is experienced in a negative

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (1929/30), trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2010 [1983]), Vol. 29/30 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976ff); hereafter FCM. References are given to the English translation as well as to the original German text of Heidegger’s works. The page number of the translation is followed by that of the original and separated from the latter by a slash. Translation modifications are indicated except for the lowercasing of abstract nouns such as “being,” “self,” “falling,” “interpretation,” etc. (I also generally refrain from capitalizing the word “being” even though this is a common practice in the literature on Heidegger’s work because (a) it is unclear to me how this sign adds to the already nuanced distinction between being and beings, and (b) capitalization in English implies not only nominalization but also uniqueness. Heidegger may well think, like Spinoza, that being is unique, but for both authors, the meaning of uniqueness does not involve a possible relation to an other—that is, other substance in the case of Spinoza, and a being that is not always already mine in the case of Heidegger. Whatever the relation between being and its name, its name should not be mistaken for a proper name and however unique being itself may be this is not as readily apparent in the form *Sein*. Likewise, I will refrain from capitalizing the word “nothing” as this would necessitate an account of why “something,” “everything,” or “nature” are not capitalized.) Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976ff.) is abbreviated as GA with the volume number and page number following.

⁹ “It is not difficult to see that deep boredom is nothing other than anxiety,” writes Jean Wahl. [“On voit aisément que cet ennui profond n’est pas autre chose que l’angoisse.”]. Although Wahl makes this statement in his 1954 *Philosophies of Existence* and thus long before the publication of Heidegger’s *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, which took place in 1983, it seems that Wahl is familiar with Heidegger’s analysis of boredom as he is able to tell us that Heidegger “comes to elaborate a whole

vein is not a specific object, whether detrimental or boring, but the entire world, or, the world “as such.” Corresponding to the “everything” that is emotionally negated in each of these moods, there is a “nothing” that is affirmed. This “nothing” designates meaninglessness and emptiness at once; it is both the absence of meaning caused by a certain failure (*Versagen*) to draw significance from all that is “encountered in the world” (*das innerweltlich Begegnende*) and the emptiness and feeling of nullity experienced as coming from within the self. To put it simply, both anxiety and boredom indicate a certain failure to engage with the world. But when one has the courage to experience these moods, rather than avoid them, one is confronted with existence in its entirety, one’s own finitude, and the necessity of one’s freedom, and through this confrontation, one becomes an individual.

The transition from anxiety to boredom, I suggest, becomes explicit in Heidegger’s thought—not because Heidegger reflects on this transition, but because his thought arguably unreflectively *undergoes* this transition. I say “unreflectively” because although Heidegger speaks of these moods in close proximity to each other in his 1929 lecture “What Is Metaphysics?”—where boredom makes its first appearance in Heidegger’s work in the role of a fundamental mood—he never considers them in juxtaposition, that is, in terms of each other, or by way of comparison.¹⁰ The transition is nevertheless made explicit through Heidegger’s thought, for although it is not directly expressed in the content of Heidegger’s deliberations on anxiety and boredom, it

hierarchy of boredom” [“Heidegger est alors amené à établir toute une hiérarchie d’ennuis”]. Jean Wahl, *Philosophies of Existence: An Introduction to the Basic Thought of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, Sartre*, trans. F. M. Lory (London: Routledge, 1969), 68; *Les philosophies de l’existence* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1959 [1954]), 102; trans. modified (*angoisse* as anxiety instead of dread).

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, “What Is Metaphysics?” (1929), trans. David Krell in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 87; “Was ist Metaphysik?” in *Wegmarken*, GA 9 (2013 [1976]), 110; hereafter WM.

becomes apparent by that which is excluded from each deliberation, certain concepts that Heidegger omits, avoids, wishes to avoid, or disregards, and certain themes that he postpones.

I thus consider the absence of boredom in Heidegger's account of anxiety and the absence of anxiety in his account of boredom as indicative of the *actual* mutual exclusiveness of these emotions. The reason why anxiety and boredom exclude each other is not because they contradict each other, for unlike logical contradictions, emotional ones are not invalid or unreal.¹¹ Moreover, to the extent that there is a sense in which anxiety and boredom are opposed to each other, it is certainly not the same sense in which such other emotional opposites as love and hate, joy and sadness, or bliss and despair are usually paired—that is, according to the divide between positive and negative or pleasure and unpleasure. In this sense, what rather comes to mind as the opposite of boredom is interest, meaningfulness, or engagement; what stands in opposition to anxiety is tranquility or a sense of security. Both anxiety and boredom, however, are primarily regarded as negative affects—notwithstanding the fact that under a second or third consideration they may appear positive to a certain degree.

Rather, anxiety and boredom are mutually exclusive because they cannot be *experienced* at the same time—and since phenomenological investigation takes lived experience as point of departure, they are also *described* separately. This is so for the simple psychological reason, on which my entire analysis hinges, that boredom, albeit a kind of distress or mental pain, can only be experienced in the absence of fear, while anxiety, although it may be experienced in the absence of danger, is essentially a fear-based mood. Thus the moment fear is introduced into the experience of boredom—for

¹¹ Cf. FCM 60ff. / 91ff.

instance, when one considers being bored a sin or waste of time and consequently becomes afraid of boredom itself—boredom is *transformed* into anxiety, and thereby annulled. Boredom can *lead* to anxiety, but once one is anxious, one is no longer bored. Once one is anxious, one becomes even more anxious rather than bored—for anxiety begets anxiety—unless one manages somehow to alleviate one’s anxiety, by chemical, behavioral, or other means, in which case one may once again become prone to boredom. In this psychological sense, it can be said that boredom is *prior* to anxiety while anxiety *supersedes* boredom. The transition from anxiety to boredom can accordingly be understood as a process that involves the undoing of the supersession, a return to a more primary state—yet not necessarily to a better one.

This becomes explicit through Heidegger, but Heidegger himself never makes it explicit—at least not fully, and certainly not in such terms. What Heidegger nonetheless does is provide further indications, by selecting to include or exclude further terms, concepts, and themes, that may help us make sense of the transition from anxiety to boredom. On at least two occasions in *Being and Time*, he asserts that he does not wish to discuss the issue of sinfulness or even imply that such a sense is involved in his understanding of human existence (224 / 179-80, 496 n. 2 / 306 n. 1; see also 313 / 269). But he does make ample use, especially in the first division of this book, of the notion of falling (*Verfallen*), which clearly invokes the dogma of original sin. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, on the other hand, where sin is not mentioned at all, one notices the absence of not only anxiety but also the anxiety-related notions of guilt (*Schuld*), conscience (*Gewissen*), and death, to which the first two chapters of the second division of *Being and Time* are dedicated.

What stands behind all this is that which provides the link to the historical context. While a great deal in Heidegger's philosophy is drawn from the religious tradition, he takes pains, especially in his early work, to differentiate philosophy—or that which he considers to be the main subject matter of the philosophical practice, and to which he at times refers as “ontology” (BT), at others as “phenomenology,”¹² and at still others as “metaphysics” (FCM)—from theology, or, “onto-theology.” This process of differentiation, even if against Heidegger's will, can be understood in terms of secularization and as part of the wider historical process bearing the same title.¹³ The exclusion of the notion of sin (*Sünde*) from *Being and Time* can be understood as a direct consequence, or aspect, of this process.

Heidegger brackets the question of sin—that is, he suspends judgment as to whether it is something real or even possible—and instead restricts his analysis to the *experience* of sinfulness—that is, to guilt and bad conscience. The insight here is one that Heidegger shares with Freud: the reality of *feeling* guilty lends itself to analysis

¹² Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenology and Theology” (1927), trans. James Hart and John Maraldo, in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39-54; “Phänomenologie und Theologie” in *Wegmarken* GA 9 (2013 [1976]), 45-78; henceforth PT.

¹³ Heidegger's relation to the theological tradition has been widely explored by commentators as well as by Heidegger himself and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis in the context of the question of Heidegger's appropriation of Kierkegaard. Although the understanding of Heidegger's relation to theology in terms of secularization has been contested—notably by Hent de Vries, who argues that Heidegger should in fact be read under the rubric of the “turn to religion” in philosophy, and even by Heidegger himself, who in his “Letter on ‘Humanism’” elaborates on why one should not understand *Being and Time* as a project of secularization—it is incontestable that (a) the differentiation between philosophy and religion is a major concern for Heidegger; (b) his proclaimed objective (at least in his earlier work) is to discriminate between the two; and (c) to understand Heidegger otherwise is, therefore, as de Vries himself confirms, to read him “against the grain.” See Hent de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 53, 207, 219, 219 n. 50, 223-24; Martin Heidegger, “Letter on ‘Humanism’” (1946), trans. Frank Capuzzi in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 249ff; “Brief über den ‘Humanismus,’” in *Wegmarken*, GA 9 (2013 [1976]), 327ff. For a helpful critical assessment of Heidegger's relation to theology, see Richard Schaeffler, “Heidegger und die Theologie” in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, eds. Annemarie Gethmann-Siebert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 286-309. For a recent historical account of the theological origins of Heidegger's philosophy, see Judith Wolfe, *Heidegger's Eschatology: Theological Horizons in Martin Heidegger's Early Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

regardless of the reality of having *acted* sinfully. However, while for Freud, guilt still implies that sin is *possible*, or that it is at least *imaginable*, for Heidegger the possible is always already real, and there is no distinction between “psychical reality” and “real” reality.¹⁴ Hence, even regarding the possibility of sin, judgment must be suspended.¹⁵ Unlike Freud, Heidegger does not trace the experience of guilt back along the chain of causes to some original sinful act or intention, whether real or mythical. He rather tries to describe the structural characteristics of the experience of guilt while considering it a phenomenon in its own right, regardless of its possible causes.¹⁶ Guilt is accordingly construed in *Being and Time* not with respect to a possible sin in the history of the individual or the species, but with respect to the possibility of the personal death of the individual, with respect to one’s relation to one’s own possibility of becoming nothing in one’s future. In view of this possibility, the feeling is generated that one lives on borrowed time, that the time that remains for one to live is an outstanding debt (*Schuld*), something that one owes to something or someone and that must therefore not be wasted.

¹⁴ As Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis suggest in their seminal essay “Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality” (in *Formations of Fantasy*, eds. Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan [London: Methuen, 1986], 7; originally published in *Les Temps Modernes* 19, no. 215, in 1964, under the title “Fantasme originaire, fantasmes des origines, origine du fantasme”), the Freudian notion that in the unconscious there are no indications of reality (as well as contradictions, negations, and linear temporality) and that there is instead a “psychical reality,” which is the realm of fantasy, “should be understood as a Greek ἐποχή, an absolute suspension of all reality judgments.” As Laplanche and Pontalis themselves immediately clarify, however, the suspension of reality judgments required by the psychoanalytic method is in fact far from absolute. Freud, unconcerned as he generally was with justifying his theories philosophically, never questioned the position of naïve realism. Inasmuch as there is something like a phenomenological reduction in Freud’s psychoanalysis, it is something which remains confined to the “analytic situation,” to the practice of free association. But Freud has always acknowledged that there is an outside of the analytic situation; that there are also “bound” associations; and that the human mind, in particular the healthy one, is something which is capable of being conscious of an external world.

¹⁵ BT 496 n. ii / 306 n. 1: “The existential analysis of being-guilty proves nothing either *for* or *against* the possibility of sin.” [“Die existenziale Analyse des Schuldigseins beweist weder etwas *für* noch *gegen* die Möglichkeit der Sünde.”]

¹⁶ Cf. BT 329 / 284 (italics omitted): “Being-guilty does not first result from an indebtedness, but... on the contrary, indebtedness becomes possible only ‘on the basis’ of a primordial being-guilty.” [“Das Schuldigsein resultiert nicht erst aus einer Verschuldung, sondern umgekehrt: diese wird erst möglich ‘auf Grund’ eines ursprünglichen Schuldigseins.”]

Granted, Heidegger's intention in *Being and Time* is not to present us with a reductionist explanation in economic or biological terms for the psychological phenomenon of guilt.¹⁷ In accordance with his general philosophical opposition to any form of reductionism or causal explanation, he considers guilt not as a psychological effect but as an ontological phenomenon that rather than being *caused* by our relation to time *finds expression* in this relation. But although for Heidegger guilt is not reducible to the calculation of one's time remaining before death, he still explains it in such terms, while the possibility of being sinful is intentionally ignored by him (to the extent that this is at all possible, which is the premise of psychoanalytic interpretation) throughout the analysis. What is left of guilt under such constraints is apparently quite different from the traditional notion of guilt. Indeed, it is questionable whether guilt survives this attempt at secularization at all, whether it remains recognizable as guilt once sin is altogether disregarded.¹⁸ In at least one respect, however, Heidegger's secularized version of guilt in *Being and Time* still accords with the traditional one: even dissociated from sinfulness, it remains an experience whose corresponding mood is anxiety. It might be possible to be sinful without experiencing guilt and vice versa, but a sense of guilt that does not involve anxiety—much like an experience of anxiety that does not involve any feeling of fear¹⁹—

¹⁷ See BT 340 / 293, where Heidegger explains that Dasein should not be regarded as a “‘household’ whose indebtedness simply need to be balanced off in an orderly manner so that the self may stand ‘by’ as a disinterested spectator while these experiences run their course.” [“...ein ‘Haushalt’, dessen Verschuldungen nur ordentlich ausgeglichen zu werden brauchen, damit das Selbst als unbeteiligter Zuschauer ‘neben’ diesen Erlebnisabläufen stehen kann.”]

¹⁸ Cf. Karl Löwith, “Grundzüge der Entwicklung der Phänomenologie zur Philosophie und ihr Verhältnis zur protestantischen Theologie (Fortsetzung),” *Theologische Rundschau*, 2 (1930): 333-36. See Edward Baring, “A Secular Kierkegaard: Confessional Readings of Heidegger before 1945,” *New German Critique* 42, no. 1 (2015): 83.

¹⁹ Although Heidegger famously distinguishes between anxiety and fear in *Being Time* (227 / 182, 230 / 185), their affective quality remains indistinguishable. As we shall see, Heidegger's existential anxiety is formally indistinguishable from Freud's neurotic anxiety. In both cases it is nothing but the experience of *fear* in the absence of a determinate danger. As Freud puts it, “we have no means of distinguishing in our

is inconceivable. Thus, alongside guilt, conscience, and death, anxiety remains a major concern for Heidegger in *Being and Time*.

As scholars have long observed, the secularizing impetus of Heidegger's philosophizing is particularly evident in the manner in which he draws on the writings of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and even appropriates Kierkegaardian ideas for himself.²⁰ In order to justify the appropriation, or, as one may put it, in order to "master"

feelings between realistic anxiety and neurotic anxiety." See Sigmund Freud, "Lecture XXV: Anxiety" (1917), SE 16: 405; "Die Angst," GW 11: 420.

²⁰ In spite or because of Heidegger's scant acknowledgment of Kierkegaardian influences on his work, which I explore in Chapter 2, there is a plethora of literature on this topic—at the center of which, alongside the question of appropriation, is often the question of secularization, as well as the concept of anxiety. See Baring, "A Secular Kierkegaard," for a recent consideration of the German context in which the "trope of Heidegger as a secular Kierkegaard... emerged" and of how this trope "quickly spread beyond Germany's borders" (88). Baring provides an account of the debate about Heidegger's secularization of Kierkegaard in consideration of the contributions to this debate by such scholars as Rudolf Bultmann, Fritz Heinemann, Erich Przywara, Emil Brunner, Heinrich Barth, Gerhardt Kuhlmann, and Karl Löwith, all of whom understood Heidegger's relation to Kierkegaard in terms of secularization, and yet, as Baring demonstrates, conceived of the notion of secularization itself differently, if not contradictorily. Heidegger was also understood in terms of secularization in the context of his immediate reception in France, notably by the "two figures" who, according to Samuel Moyn, "were absolutely beyond question the most significant in the dissemination and popularization of Kierkegaard in [French] intellectual circles," Lev Shestov and Jean Wahl. But while Wahl was heavily influenced by Heidegger, in the eyes of Shestov, the charge of appropriation was a reason for dismissing Heidegger. Thus, George Pattison quotes Shestov's statement that *Being and Time* "consists only of putting [Kierkegaard's] ideas into a Husserlian framework," and that this is merely "an attempt, under the flag of phenomenology, to smuggle something non-philosophical into the territory of philosophy, that is, the Biblical account of the Fall and original sin." Regarding Jean Wahl, Alejandro Sánchez and Azucena Sánchez write that "taking *Angst* as the point of departure for Heidegger's philosophy, Wahl proposes that the entire Heideggerian way of thinking can be interpreted as a secularization of Kierkegaard" and that Wahl already "argues for this in a 1932 article in *Recherches philosophique* entitled 'Heidegger et Kierkegaard.'" Considering the history of anxiety, Samuel Moyn notes that Heidegger "was the first to give anxiety particular philosophical attention" and "when he did so, it was precisely in the direction of separation and secularization of Kierkegaard's long-marginal theme." Wahl, considered by Moyn "the first French Kierkegaardian to be influenced by Heidegger's intermediation," carried on working in that direction by way of elaborating his own "constructive project" of the "secularization of anxiety." See Samuel Moyn, "Transcendence, Morality, and History: Emmanuel Levinas and the Discovery of Søren Kierkegaard in France," *Yale French Studies* 104 (2004): 28; Samuel Moyn, "Anxiety and Secularization: Søren Kierkegaard and the Twentieth-Century Invention of Existentialism," in *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and Jonathan Judaken (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 284, 290; George Pattison, "Lev Shestov: Kierkegaard in the Ox of Phalaris," in *Kierkegaard and Existentialism*, ed., Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 357 (text in square brackets inserted by Pattison); and, in the same volume, Alejandro Sánchez and Azucena Sánchez, "Jean Wahl: Philosophies of Existence and Kierkegaard," 398, 401. Also in the same volume, one can find Vincent McCarthy's helpful overview of the theme of Heidegger's secularization and appropriation of Kierkegaard, including an extensive bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources: "Martin Heidegger: Kierkegaard's Influence Hidden and in Full View," 95-125. McCarthy, too, focuses on the concept of anxiety in his study of Heidegger's appropriation of Kierkegaard

his “anxiety of influence,”²¹ Heidegger had to consider Kierkegaard as merely a “religious writer” rather than a true “thinker.”²²

This is the immediate intellectual-historical context against which the significance of Heidegger’s deliberate and explicit disregard of the possibility of sin in *Being and Time* should be understood. For Kierkegaard does precisely the opposite. As Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis asserts in the introduction to *The Concept of Anxiety*, “The present work has set as its task the psychological treatment of the concept of ‘anxiety,’ but in such a way that it constantly keeps *in mente* [in mind] and before its eye the dogma of hereditary sin.”²³ This is not only the proclaimed *task* of *The Concept of Anxiety*—which in *Being and Time* Heidegger considers the most penetrative treatment of the phenomenon of anxiety in the Christian tradition (492 n. iv / 190 n. 1)—but also the main *thesis* of this book; namely, that the psychological analysis of anxiety necessarily exhausts itself in such a manner that “it points directly to dogmatics” (9). In

(106-10). A reading of *Being and Time* along such lines by Dreyfus and Rubin is also discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 of the current work. See Hubert Dreyfus and Jane Rubin, “Kierkegaard, Division II, and Later Heidegger,” published as an appendix to *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division One*, by Hubert L. Dreyfus (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995), 283-340.

²¹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997 [1973]). Though the phenomenon of influence anxiety is specifically developed by Bloom as a theory of poetry, it is arguably also appropriate to examine Heidegger’s philosophical writing as an exemplary case of this phenomenon. A similar suggestion is made by Wolfe in *Heidegger’s Eschatology*, 4 n. 5. In particular, as we shall see in Part I of this thesis, the anxiety of *Being and Time* (i.e., the fact that Heidegger selected this particular mood among other possibilities) is explainable in such terms. Cf. also Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 235. This, however, does not necessarily imply that Heidegger could be better understood if read as a poet rather than as a philosopher inasmuch as creativity is also a crucial factor in the practice of philosophy; cf. FCM 183 / 271.

²² “Kierkegaard is not a thinker but a religious writer.” [“Kierkegaard ist kein Denker, sondern ein religiöser Schriftsteller.”] Martin Heidegger, “Nietzsche’s Word: ‘God Is Dead’” (1943), in his *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 186; “Nietzsches Wort ‘Gott ist tot,’” *Holzwege*, GA 5 (1977), 249.

²³ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, trans. Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 14; *Begrebet Angest: En simpel psykologisk-paapegende Overveelse i Retning af det dogmatiske Problem om Arvesynden*, in *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter* (1844), eds. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Søren Kierkegaard Research Center, 1994-2012), vol. 4, 321; hereafter CA.

the second part of this thesis, I show that this claim finds confirmation in the *actual* evolution of Freud's psychoanalytic theory of anxiety, which culminated in the realization that the ontogenetic account of anxiety, which cannot go beyond the trauma of birth, must be supplemented by a phylogenetic one. But unlike Freud, who is led to his speculations about phylogenetic trauma in his search for the "realistic" origins of "neurotic" anxiety, Kierkegaard considers anxiety not only as a psychological consequence of prohibition and sin, but also—and more perplexingly—as the psychological *presupposition* of the dogma of original sin. This is perplexing because a dogma is by definition something that posits itself. Kierkegaard addresses this issue through the introduction of a crucial distinction—which, *mutatis mutandis*, plays a crucial role in Freud's theory of repression—between the *fact* of being sinful and the *mechanism* whereby one *becomes* sinful. (For Freud, as I show in Chapter 5, the corresponding distinction is between the fact of repression and the mechanism whereby repression happens.) The fact of sin, Kierkegaard confirms, can only be explained by the science of dogmatics, that is, by being presupposed—as he writes, "Through the first sin, sin came into the world" (31; see also 20-22). However, the mechanism whereby one becomes sinful, the very transition from innocence to sinfulness, can only be explained, according to Kierkegaard, through the concept of anxiety, the "intermediate term" between innocence and sinfulness (49). Hence, the only science capable of explaining sin in such a manner is the science for which anxiety is the primary concern; this science is not metaphysics, ethics, or dogmatics, but psychology. "The mood of psychology," Kierkegaard writes, "is that of a discovering anxiety, and in its anxiety psychology

portrays sin, while again and again it is in anxiety over the portrayal that it itself brings forth” (15).

The reason why anxiety is the intermediate term between innocence and sinfulness is also the reason why anxiety, rather than boredom, has become such an important concept in modern psychology. It is because anxiety is inherently ambiguous in relation to the question of guilt. As Kierkegaard explains,

He who becomes guilty through anxiety is indeed innocent for it was not he himself but anxiety, a foreign power, that laid hold of him, a power that he did not love but about which he was anxious. And yet he is guilty, for he sank in anxiety, which he nevertheless loved even as he feared it. There is nothing in the world more ambiguous; therefore this is the only psychological explanation. (43)

How modern clinical psychology has exploited the resources of this ambiguity is explored in Part 2. Briefly put, the explanation is that to the extent that one is guilty, one deserves no sympathy and has no reason to complain; if no one is guilty, there is no point in complaining; and if someone else is guilty, one should appeal to a judge. But if one is both guilty and not guilty, then the nature of one’s problem is psychological.²⁴ To complete the outline of Part 1, let us restate that in *The Concept of Anxiety* Kierkegaard not only explains sin through anxiety and anxiety through sin, but also understands the concept of anxiety itself as the presupposition of sin. The very conceptualization of anxiety involves the presupposition of the dogma of original sin. In *Being and Time*, by contrast, while Heidegger makes use of the Kierkegaardian concept, he dismisses the theological grounds on which it is based. This is most apparent in Heidegger’s attempt to avoid the notion of sin. In this more specific sense, Heidegger’s concept of anxiety is a secularized version of Kierkegaard’s concept of anxiety.

²⁴ This is arguably why Kierkegaard defines anxiety as “*sympathetic antipathy* and *antipathetic sympathy*” [“*en sympatetisk Antipathie og en antipatetisk Sympathie*”] (CA 42 / 348).

Heidegger wishes to dismiss not only the religious but also the psychological grounds of the Kierkegaardian concept, considering anxiety ontologically, rather than psychologically. But in *Being and Time* he does not refrain from exploiting the resources of ambiguity inherent in this concept by appealing to the notion of guilt and explicating it in terms of the “call of conscience” and Dasein’s “being-toward-death.” When he analyzes the phenomenon of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, on the other hand, he disregards not only the possibility of sin but also the consciousness of guilt and the relation to death. This brings us all the way from the anxiety of Kierkegaard’s *Concept of Anxiety*, in which there is a sense of guilt involved and the dogma of original sin is presupposed; through Heidegger’s concept of anxiety, in which there is guilt but no sin; to boredom, which excludes the senses of both guilt and sinfulness. With the exclusion of sin from *Being and Time*, Heidegger presents us with a secularized version of Kierkegaard’s concept of anxiety. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, anxiety is further secularized, through the elimination of guilt, and what emerges is termed no longer “anxiety” but “boredom.”

In this way, one important aspect of the mutual exclusiveness of boredom and anxiety is brought to light. Whereas anxiety, insofar as it is nothing but fear in the absence of a determinate or external danger, involves nonetheless a sense that danger is ubiquitous or internal, and is therefore closely associated with guilt, which, in turn, and in spite of Heidegger’s denial, can hardly be dissociated from the possibility of sin and the religious tradition, the experience of boredom, since it is essentially a fear-free mood, necessarily entails the absence of guilt and involves no reference to sin. This is why such references are not even denied by Heidegger in his analysis of boredom.

In a nutshell, the hypothesis put forth in the first part of this dissertation is that the transition from anxiety to boredom, at once textual and contextual, is a consequence of processes of secularization whereby the morally and theologically charged psychological constructs of guilt, sinfulness, and conscience have undergone a fundamental transformation necessitating a redefinition and reevaluation of the individual's relation to the experience of emptiness, meaninglessness, or nothingness. In sociological terms, religious life is existentially anxiety based, while secular life is boredom based. In other words, since boredom does not involve a sense of sinfulness or a guilty conscience, it can be considered a secularized form of anxiety.

These formulations may appear at once as trivial, stereotypical, inadequate, utterly wrong, hopelessly unfalsifiable, or else as something that must have already been said before; and as we shall indeed see, this impression, almost each of these possible appearances, is not entirely misleading but rather indicative of the very nature of the subject matter of this study—be it the trivial nature of boredom, the special epistemological constraints involved in the qualitative study of emotions, or the dialectical nature of the history of secularization. The transition from anxiety to boredom nevertheless manifests itself not only in the form of a conceptual transition at a particular moment in the development of Heidegger's thought, but also in the form of broader and yet more concrete developments in the history of psychology and psychiatry and in the history and theory of secularization. Following the philosophical deliberation on the essence of anxiety and boredom in Part 1, the transition from anxiety to boredom is explored from a historical-psychological perspective in Part 2. As we move to the more empirical domains of this investigation, we will gradually see in what sense the

formulations presented in the previous paragraph, with certain qualifications, are in fact descriptive of wider historical transformations that have been noticed before but not sufficiently examined.²⁵

While in Part 1 I consider anxiety and boredom philosophically and psychologically and as mutually exclusive concepts and experiences, in Part 2 I show that when viewed historically and sociologically, these moods appear to have developed in parallel and by way of mutual reinforcement, rather than at each other's expense. The literature on boredom is replete with observations regarding the growing prevalence of boredom in the modern era, and these are often supported by remarks made to a similar effect by prominent authors, especially since the Romantic period. Thus, echoing Kierkegaard's ironic remark that boredom increases in direct proportion to the increase in human population,²⁶ scholars, especially literary historians, have seriously argued that boredom has been "domesticated"²⁷ or "democratized,"²⁸ that it is "a metaphor for the postmodern condition,"²⁹ that modern literature "depicts the triumph of the demon of

²⁵ For example, in a psychoanalytic-sociological account of boredom and regarding the post-World War II period, Haskell Bernstein argues that "our former Age of Anxiety has given way to an Age of Boredom." See Bernstein, "Boredom and the Ready-Made Life," *Social Research*, 42, no. 3 (1975): 536. But Bernstein only mentions this idea in passing and does not develop it. The idea that boredom should be understood in terms of anxiety also appears in Healy's *Boredom, Self, and Culture*, 69, 73, 73 n. 39. But like Bernstein, Healy does not consider the implications of this idea. The most significant occurrence of this idea I have thus far encountered is in a 1962 paper by the follower of Heidegger Medard Boss titled "Anxiety, Guilt and Psychotherapeutic Liberation," *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 2, no. 3 (1962): 173-195. However, Boss also presents this idea as a comment on the neuroses of the post-World War II period, rather than as an aspect of a wider late modern process—and, what is more crucial, fails to acknowledge the absence of guilt in boredom (177). In "Anxiety and Secularization," Moyn makes the suggestion that Boss' idea should be understood in the framework of secularization (298) and as a later stage in the development of the secularization of Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety by such figures as Jaspers, Heidegger, Binswanger, Pfister, Wahl, and Sartre.

²⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*, Part I, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 286; *Enten—Eller: Et Livs-Fragment* (1843), SKS 2: 276. For a quotation of the relevant passage, see below, p. 173-4.

²⁷ Leslie Paul Thiele, "Postmodernity and the Routinization of Novelty: Heidegger on Boredom and Technology," *Polity* 26, no. 4 (1997): 495.

²⁸ Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities*, *passim*.

²⁹ Spacks, *Boredom*, 260.

noontide over a despairing world,”³⁰ even that we have reached “the peak of universal boredom.”³¹ As Sean Healy put it some three decades ago,

the records of man’s thought and experience unmistakably [show] that, while joy, anger, love, hate, and the rest have continued to delight or to plague him on a more or less constant level, boredom has a history and has gradually emerged from near obscurity to center stage. . . . What was once a rare state of mind, confined at least in the common estimation of later times to an effete elite, has now become the common property of the bored horde.³²

Claims about the expansion of boredom can be framed in a myriad of ways.

Likewise, the reasons that have been given for this expansion are as varied as modernity itself. Patricia Spacks explains the emergence of boredom in terms of secularization, work-leisure differentiation, individualization, and the increase of self-awareness.³³ Others emphasize the roles of professionalization and automatization;³⁴ growing abstraction and institutionalization;³⁵ and (perhaps most relevant in this age of electronic communication) information overload.³⁶ As with other descriptions of the *longue durée*, however, theories about the expansion of boredom invite many questions about the what, when, how, who, and where of this phenomenon. To what extent and in what manner should one speak in this regard of a quantitative or qualitative change? Moreover, boredom itself is a fairly “thick” concept (as some philosophers would have it), and, as such, it has various normative and descriptive designations the essential entanglement of which hinders impartial observation. Even if one is willing to suspend definitions or considerations of philosophical rigor in favor of broader sociological descriptions, it still

³⁰ Kuhn, *Demon of Noontide*, 373-4.

³¹ Lewis Mumford, cited in Thiele, “Postmodernity,” 493.

³² Healy, *Boredom*, 15.

³³ Spacks, *Boredom*.

³⁴ Tibor Scitovsky, “Boredom: An Overlooked Disease?” *Challenges* 42, no. 5 (1999): 5-15; Frankl, *Man’s Search*.

³⁵ Zijderveld, *On Clichés*.

³⁶ Klapp, *Overload*; Orrin E. Klapp, *Inflation of Symbols: Loss of Values in American Culture* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1991).

remains questionable in what way boredom is different from, or what value it adds to, such traditional sociological concepts as Marx's alienation, Durkheim's anomie, Simmel's blasé attitude, Weber's disenchantment and rationalization, Lukács' contemplative attitude, or, more recently, Taylor's malaise—which appear to describe the same set of modern problems.

A detailed discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this Introduction, but since secularization is at the center of this thesis a remark must be made about Weber's notion of disenchantment—which primarily refers not to the culmination of the process of secularization in a state of atheism, but to religious reform and the transition from being in monasteries to being in the world. On the one hand, the notion of disenchantment fails to capture the strangeness and peculiarity of boredom, its inherently ambiguous or confused, indeed emotional, nature. On the other hand, rationalization involves not only disenchantment but also a return to doubt, questioning, and wonder.³⁷ While Weber's description of the process of rationalization is consistent with the conventional progressive-developmental implications of the analogy between enlightenment and maturity (*Mündigkeit*) proposed by Kant,³⁸ the notion of disenchantment, which for Weber is simply an aspect of rationalization, corresponds, from a psychoanalytic perspective, to the narcissistic stage of the child's development. According to Freud, Ferenczi, and Klein, this stage is characterized by megalomania and a sense of omnipotence—the omnipotence of thoughts, feelings, and wishes or

³⁷ Or the relation between boredom and skepticism, see Goodstein, *Experience Without Qualities*, 112.

³⁸ Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? (1784)," in *Was ist Aufklärung: Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, ed. Horst D. Brandt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1999), 20.

omnipotence in general.³⁹ As Weber explains in his 1917 lecture on “Science as a Vocation” (“Wissenschaft als Beruf”),

the growing process of intellectualization and rationalization does *not* imply a growing understanding of the conditions under which we live. It means something quite different. It is the knowledge or the conviction that if *only we wished* to understand them we *could* do so at any time. It means that in principle, then, we are not ruled by mysterious, unpredictable forces, but that, on the contrary, we can in principle *control everything by means of calculation*. That in turn means the disenchantment of the world.⁴⁰

This point can also be seen without recourse to psychoanalytic explanation. We are all familiar with the endless curiosity of children, their urge to ask questions, their conviction that they can know or do everything on their own, and their proneness to boredom. We also know that it is adults who tend to be dogmatic, easily become weary of children’s questions, think that they already know enough about certain things, and keep themselves resistant to boredom through business and busyness. Adults, to put it more positively, are aware of their intellectual, emotional, and physical limitations, of their finitude. Unlike disenchantment, the transition to boredom highlights the sense in which secularization can be conceived of as a movement of return, a regress rather than

³⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis* (1909), SE 10: 151-318; *Bemerkungen über einen Fall von Zwangsneurose*, GW 7: 381-463. Sándor Ferenczi, “Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality,” in his *Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Ernest Jones (Boston: Richard G. Badger and The Copp Clark Company, 1916 [1913]), 181-203. See also Melanie Klein’s case history “Development of a Child” (1921) in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 1-53. It should be noted, however, that my use of the concept of narcissism also implies a reversal of what Freud, Ferenczi, and Klein suggest, which is that the early stages of the child’s development correspond to the early stages of human development, a stage that is characterized by belief in magic and the tendency toward religiosity. Thus, for Ferenczi, it is through magic and hallucination that the child manages to ignore reality so as to preserve its illusion of omnipotence. On the other hand, “The sense of reality attains its zenith in science, while the illusion of omnipotence here experiences its greatest humiliation: the previous omnipotence here dissolves into mere ‘condition.’... Nevertheless, we possess in the doctrine of the free will an optimistic philosophical dogma that can still realise phantasies of omnipotence” (ibid., 197). These suggestions are similar to Weber’s in that they (a) are premised on the position of naïve realism, (b) involve the further assumption that scientific observation and attitude bring the individual closer to reality, and (c) emphasize (along with Kant) courage rather than curiosity as the mood of scientific investigation.

⁴⁰ Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” trans. Rodney Livingstone, in David Owen and Tracy Strong (eds.) *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 12-13.

progress. Just like unbelief, which has always been possible as an intellectual position, boredom has always been possible as a psychological state. Hence, modernity did not invent boredom, but is a return to boredom. If unbelief has become the default option of the secular age, boredom has become its default mood or affect.

But this only tells us something about the specific difference between the notions of boredom and disenchantment, while our task here is to situate boredom more broadly in the context of the history and sociology of modernity. In this regard, there is a crucial difference between boredom and the aforementioned notions. While the notions of alienation, anomie, disenchantment, blasé attitude, contemplative attitude, and malaise have been developed in order to *describe* the psychological challenges entailed by modern development, boredom has evolved quite naturally as an *expression* of these challenges. Rather than being a merely technical term, boredom is intimately associated with the colloquial, both its colloquial *use* and the colloquial *as such*. Not only is boredom firmly grounded in common sense, but also the *claim* about the expansion of boredom, however broad and contestable, is largely commonsensical. Everyday speech is the realm where the phenomenon of boredom manifests itself most directly and clearly. Unlike other sociological concepts (and unlike anxiety), “boredom” occurs in the same linguistic form in both everyday and theoretical discourse. In social scientific terms, it can be said that “boredom” is indifferent to the -emic/-etic divide (self- and other-description). The expansion of boredom coincides with its increasing prevalence in common discourse. Thus, regardless of the theoretical content withdrawn from or into the concept of boredom in the literature on boredom, boredom retains its meaning in the domain of the taken-for-granted, the domain to which Heidegger often refers in *Being*

and Time with the expression “proximally and for the most part” (“*zunächst und zumeist*”; see, for example, 37 / 16, 69 / 43), and which he examines in the book’s first division, while conducting the “preparatory analysis” of “average everydayness” (67ff. / 41ff.). Taking this semantic domain as a point of departure and adopting thereby Heidegger’s phenomenological hermeneutic methodology,⁴¹ I will examine the appealing claim about the expansion of boredom by considering this expansion as part of an historical transition that has anxiety as its origin. Instead of proceeding from definitions, this investigation proceeds from common sense and common practices as they appear in discourse.

What does it mean to say that there has been an actual sociohistorical transition from anxiety to boredom? One may accept the claim that boredom has become more prevalent, that people have become more prone to boredom, that the lexeme “boredom” occurs more frequently in everyday speech, and perhaps even the idea that boredom has become a major metaphysical concern for modern societies. It would be wrong, however, to assume that in exchange for the expansion of boredom, anxiety has diminished. Inasmuch as it is justifiable to characterize entire societies or epochs by ascribing certain moods to them, to describe modern society in terms of fear or anxiety and to do so in terms of boredom appear equally acceptable. This is where the aforementioned problem of falsifiability becomes apparent. A contemporary historian of emotions might draw inspiration from Auden’s 1947 poem “The Age of Anxiety” and consider “fear,” rather

⁴¹ As Heidegger explains in *Being and Time* (50 / 28), though the phenomenological maxim “To the things themselves!” may appear “abundantly self-evident,” “In point of fact, the issue here is a kind of ‘self-evidence’ which we should like to bring closer to us” [“Es geht in der Tat um eine ‘Selbstverständlichkeit’, die wir uns näher bringen wollen”]. See also BT 37-8 / 16-17, FCM 232 / 338-39.

than boredom, “the most pervasive emotion of modern society.”⁴² Modern is new, and the road from the new to the shocking is short. More often than not, modern history has been one of shock, trauma, and terror. Notwithstanding their mutual exclusiveness at the philosophical and psychological levels, both boredom and anxiety—like secularity and religiosity—have been on the increase, or radicalized, at the social level, and both of these processes have been observed, analyzed, and described from various disciplinary perspectives. What has been overlooked, however, aside from the need to consider the histories of anxiety and boredom in juxtaposition,⁴³ is the fact that the distinctly modern discursive realm in which the concept of anxiety has probably gained its widest currency is also the one from which the concept of boredom has been systematically excluded, namely, psychopathology.

Part 2 demonstrates that some of the roots of the systematic exclusion of boredom from psychopathological discourse can be traced back to Freud, and more specifically to the *presupposition of anxiety* in his psychoanalytic psychology. Here, too, my primary piece of evidence is a conspicuous absence. Despite the general lack of attention to the

⁴² Joanna Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (London: Virago, 2005), ix.

⁴³ Though as noted above some remarks to such an effect have been made by Boss (“Anxiety,” 174), Bernstein (“Boredom,” 536), Healy (*Boredom*, 69, 73, and 73 n. 39), and Moyn (“Anxiety and Secularization,” 298). The idea that anxiety and boredom should be considered in juxtaposition also figures in Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow, which has been widely influential in and beyond the fields of positive and organizational psychology. See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: The Experience of Play in Work and Games* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975). Mark D. Altschule has systematically compared between anxiety and boredom in his critique of the privileging of anxiety in psychopathology. See his “Invalidity of the Diagnosis ‘Anxiety Neurosis’: Notes on Curiosity and Boredom as Motivating Forces,” *New York State Journal of Medicine*, 59 (1959): 3812-3822; and “Acedia: Its Evolution from Deadly Sin to Psychiatric Syndrome,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 3 (1965): 117-19. In the phenomenological tradition, directly against the backdrop of Heidegger’s work, Jean-Luc Marion has pursued the argument that “boredom must not be confused with anxiety” in the following works: “L’angoisse et l’ennui: Pour interpréter ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’, *Archives de Philosophie*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (1980), 121-46; *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology*, trans. by Thomas Carlson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), ch. 6: 167-202; and, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), ch. 4, especially 115-19.

problem of boredom in early clinical psychology, it is remarkable that as prolific an author and acute observer of the human soul as Freud, who often complained about boredom in his personal writings⁴⁴ and even wrote a book about the “psychopathology of everyday life,” failed to address the problem of boredom in his theoretical and clinical writings. The concept of anxiety, by contrast, was so widely utilized by him that throughout most of his work there is no recognizable difference between what he meant in his use of this concept and his supposedly wider or more fundamental concept of unpleasure (*Unlust*).⁴⁵ While Freud’s “neuroses” have long been replaced by the contemporary “disorders,” the concept of anxiety, which Freud distinguished from the all-inclusive category of neurasthenia as early as 1894,⁴⁶ has continued to dominate the diagnostic language of psychopathology, lending itself to a rapidly increasing use both as a diagnostic category and as a form of patient complaint. As shown in a large study made a decade ago, almost a third of Americans suffer at some point in their lives but mostly chronically and from a relatively early age from what until recently⁴⁷ was to be considered a form of anxiety disorder.⁴⁸ “Anxiety disorders,” it has been claimed, “represent the single largest mental health problem” in the United States.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ For a few telling examples, see *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess: 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1985), 278, 415; *The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein 1871-1881*, ed. Walter Boehlich, trans. Arnold Pomerans (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 28. *The Freud/Jung Letters: The Correspondence Between Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung*, ed. William McGuire, trans. Ralph Manheim and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 178. For quotations, see chapter 4, footnote 2.

⁴⁵ See Alan Compton, “A study of the Psychoanalytic Theory of anxiety I: The development of Freud’s theory of anxiety,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 20, no. 1 (1972): 3-44.

⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, “On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description ‘Anxiety Neurosis’” (1894), SE 3: 90-117; “Über die Berechtigung von der Neurasthenie einen bestimmten Symptomenkomplex als “Angst-Neurose” abzutrennen,” GW 1: 315-42.

⁴⁷ That is, according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV* of the American Psychiatric Association, (Washington: American Psychiatric Association, 1994); henceforth DSM 4.

⁴⁸ Ronald C. Kessler, Patricia Berglund, Olga Demler, Robert Jin, Kathleen R. Merikangas, and Ellen E. Walters, “Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National

By contrast, in spite of a growing awareness within and without the field of psychopathology of the problem of boredom, and in spite of attempts that have been made to identify a pathological or “chronic” instance of this common mental experience,⁵⁰ boredom has never gained the official status of a “mental disorder.” At best, boredom has been regarded as a contributing factor associated with various psychiatric conditions⁵¹—including, very significantly, conditions created in the course of treatment⁵²—but boredom has never been officially recognized as a psychiatric condition in its own right. The most recent edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of*

Comorbidity Survey Replication,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 62, no. 6 (2005): 593-602. The second most prevalent class of mental disorders according to this oft-cited study is mood disorders, with lifetime prevalence of 24.8%, most of which is due to major depressive disorder (16.6%). But since the diagnostic discriminability of anxiety and depression is questionable (see Barlow, *Anxiety*, 61-2) and since cases of substance use disorders, whose prevalence according to Kessler et al. is 14.6%, are often understood as forms of self-medication concealing some anxiety disorder (ibid., 23), one may speak of even higher prevalence rates of diagnosable anxiety. See also Jean Twenge, “The Age of Anxiety? Birth Cohort Change in Anxiety and Neuroticism, 1952-1993,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79, no. 6 (2000): 1007-1021. One of Twenge’s findings is that, “anxiety is so high now that normal samples of children from the 1980s outscore psychiatric populations from the 1950s.”

⁴⁹ Barlow, *Anxiety*, 22.

⁵⁰ E.g., Otto Fenichel, “On the Psychology of Boredom,” *Organization and Pathology of Thought: Selected Sources*, trans. and ed., David Rapaport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951): 349–361. Ralph R. Greenson “On Boredom,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 1 (1953): 7-21; Edmund Bergler, “On the Disease-Entity Boredom (‘alyosis’) and its Psychopathology,” *Psychiatric Quarterly* 19 (1945): 38-51. Scitovsky, “Boredom: An Overlooked Disease?”; Richard W. Bargdill, “The Study of Life Boredom” *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 31, no. 2, 2000: 188-219; Shelley A. Fahlman, Kimberley B. Mercer and Peter Gaskovski, “Does a Lack of Life Meaning Cause Boredom? Results from Psychometric, Longitudinal, and Experimental Analyses,” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 28, no. 3, 2009: 307-340.

⁵¹ In particular, boredom has been associated with gambling, substance use, eating, and obsessive compulsive disorders. See M. Stickney and R. G. Miltenberger, “Evaluating Direct and Indirect Measures for the Functional Assessment of Binge Eating,” *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 26 (1999): 195–204. S. E. Iso-Ahola and E. D. Crowley, “Adolescent Substance Abuse and Leisure Boredom,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 23, no. 3 (1991): 260–271. R. M. Ganley, “Emotion and Eating in Obesity: A review of the Literature,” *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 8 (1989): 343-361. Alex, Blaszczyński, Neil McConaghy, and Anna Frankova, “Boredom Proneness in Pathological Gambling,” *Psychological Reports* 67, no. 1 (1990): 35-42; and G. J. Diefenbach, S. Mouton-Odum, and M. A. Stanley, “Affective Correlates of Trichotillomania,” *Behavior Research and Therapy* 40 (2002): 1305-1315.

⁵² See Todman McWelling, “Boredom and Psychotic Disorders: Cognitive and Motivational Issues,” *Psychiatry* 66, no. 2 (2003): 146-167. This concern arguably goes back to Freud’s worries about Weir Mitchell’s boredom-inflicting “rest cure” as expressed in his paper “The Psychotherapy of Hysteria” (1893), in Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), SE 2: 267; “Zur Psychotherapie der Hysterie” in *Studien über Hysterie*, GW 1: 266; hereafter abbreviated as *Studies*. Cf. also Freud’s early paper on “Hysteria” (1888), SE 1: 55.

Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (2013) remains similar to the previous editions of this widely used manual, which in turn are consistent with Freud's writings, in that the word "boredom" hardly occurs in it. Should this surprise us? Perhaps not. But equally unsurprising is that anxiety has at the same time become increasingly prevalent not only as a contributing factor and a form of complaint, but also as both a general category of officially recognized and widely known mental disorders and a specific disorder acknowledged in its own right and subsumed under this category—so that one can suffer from a generalized anxiety disorder, or from an anxiety disorder that is not otherwise specified, while both of these diagnostic categories are subsumed under the category of anxiety disorders.

One of the most significant facts about boredom, on the other hand, insofar as it can be considered a distinctly modern phenomenon, is that the word "boredom" itself was relatively recently coined. While anxiety goes back to the classical Latin *anxiētās*, the earliest cited occurrence of "boredom" cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from as late as 1853, in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. The earliest cited occurrence of the verbal form on which this abstract noun is based, "to bore" (in the meaning of being tedious rather than in that of piercing a hole), dates from 1768. When the British statesman and philologist George Cornwall Lewis offered a concise description of this psychological experience a year before the lexicalization of "boredom" by Dickens, he had to follow the then- common practice of borrowing from the French, using *ennui* (which finds its etymological origins in the contraction of the Latin *in odio*, part of the expression, *est mihi in odio*, "it is hateful to me").⁵³ But the sense in which boredom is a distinctly

⁵³ George Cornwall Lewis, *A Treatise on the Methods of Observations in Politics*, vol. 2 (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1852), 184:

modern phenomenon must have something to do with the sense in which it is different from ennui. Unlike ennui, boredom is not an elevated or sophisticated expression of the experience of something, be it an object, a person, a situation, or one's life, as all too banal or trivial. Rather, as an expression of the experience of the banal, boredom itself is a banal expression. In other words, boredom is a distinctly modern phenomenon only inasmuch as it is *no longer* considered a unique experience or mode of expression. Thus while the concept of anxiety has proliferated in psychopathological discourse, the use of the lexeme "boredom" has undergone its widest extension in everyday discourse (as well as in artistic representations of and scholarly reflections on the everyday). To put it more schematically, while anxiety has become pathological, boredom has proven to be inherently normal. Correspondingly, while anxiety has received growing attention from the more pathologically oriented fields of psychology like psychoanalysis, the phenomenon of boredom has been more widely studied and referred to in such nonpathologically oriented branches of psychology as existential psychology, positive psychology, and behaviorism.⁵⁴ What Tolstoy once described as the "desire for desires" also appears today as an inherently nonpathological pathos.⁵⁵

Considered historically and sociologically, therefore, the transition from anxiety to boredom does not appear as a linear process whereby the latter mood has replaced the

When the mind is not stimulated by new pleasures, or occupied by pursuits which habit has rendered agreeable, it is subject to that oppressive and wearisome state of languor, which the French have designated by *ennui*. *Ennui* may sometimes be caused by the superfluous iteration of the same idea, or a monotonous repetition of the same act; but in general it arises from a want of excitement or employment for the mind, or from a participation in pursuits foreign to our tastes and habits.

Cf. also Chaucer's description of the sin of acedia in *Canterbury Tales* (*Parson's Tale*): "Of Accidie comth first, that a man is anoyed." Cited in Healy, *Boredom*, 17-18.

⁵⁴ Frankl, *Man's Search*; Berlyne, *Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity*; Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom*.

⁵⁵ Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, vol. II, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 2009), 58.

former or whereby the supersession of the latter by the former has been in any simple way “undone.” Rather the transition appears as a process of *bifurcation*, a bifurcation namely of religious anxiety into *two* ideal-typical secular forms: pathological anxiety and normal anxiety. But unlike the Freudian working definition of “normal anxiety” (in opposition to “neurotic anxiety”) as fear in the presence of actual danger,⁵⁶ in our case normal anxiety is distinguishable from anxiety itself in that it is a form of distress that does not involve any fear or danger. Normal anxiety is not anxiety, but that which has become anxiety through the introduction of fear into the experience of emptiness or meaninglessness. From another perspective, normal anxiety can be regarded as the “residue” of previously undifferentiated religious anxiety that has not lent itself to systematic psychopathological or diagnostic use. Normal anxiety is that which pervasively manifests itself today in the form of boredom.

In what sense can pathological anxiety and boredom be said to have originated in religious anxiety? In Part 2, it will be shown that in a manner that is analogous to Kierkegaard’s conceptualization of anxiety as the psychological presupposition of the dogma of original sin, anxiety reveals itself in the course of Freud’s writing as the presupposition of his theory of repression, the theory which Freud describes as the “corner-stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests.”⁵⁷ As in the case of the dogma of original sin, Freud’s doctrine of repression is explicitly explained by him as something that posits itself, something that can only be explained by being

⁵⁶ Freud, “Anxiety,” SE 16: 392-411 / GW 11: 407-426.

⁵⁷ Sigmund Freud, “The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” (1914), SE 14: 16; “Zur Geschichte der psycho-analytischen Bewegung,” GW 10: 54.

presupposed.⁵⁸ Like sin, repression is an intentional act the outcome of which is anxiety—except that instead of the familiar anxiety of guilt, Freud presents us with an unintuitive, “economic” description of anxiety as “transformed libido.” Yet as opposed to sin, which is essentially an *offensive* act,⁵⁹ repression, albeit active and intentional, is an act of *defense*. While sin is an original act,⁶⁰ repression is mostly a reaction—or in Freudian terms, an “after-pressure” (*Nachdrängen*).⁶¹ While it takes a Kierkegaard to demonstrate that anxiety is the presupposition of sin, one must think counter-intuitively in order *not* to see that repression, as a mechanism of defense, presupposes anxiety. Throughout much of his career, however, Freud insisted that anxiety is the outcome, rather than the cause of repression; that is, until 1926, when in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*), he conceded that anxiety must be prior to repression.⁶² Affirming that pathology begins with passion rather than action, Freud also denied thereby the ideological premise of the psychoanalytic project, which is to treat patients as agents. Freud’s urge to imagine alternatives to the biblical narrative of the fall

⁵⁸ We shall explore the different occasions on which Freud makes this point explicit. Particularly notable is his attempt to explain “repression proper” (*eigentliche Verdrängung*) through the assumption (*Annahme*) of “primal repression” (*Urverdrängung*) in his meta-psychological paper “Repression” (“Die Verdrängung”; 1915). SE 14: 148 / GW 10: 250.

⁵⁹ This is so, as Kierkegaard explains, because sin is an act performed “directly before God.” See Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. and trans. Howard Hong and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 83ff.

⁶⁰ See Theodor Reik *Myth and Guilt: The Crime and Punishment of Mankind* (New York: George Braziller, 1957), xiii.

⁶¹ “After-pressure” (*Nachdrängen*) is equivalent to “repression proper” (*eigentliche Verdrängung*) i.e., to that which is usually referred to by Freud as simply “repression” and which involves the “withdrawal of cathexis” (“Entziehung von besetzung”; rather than the mechanism of “anti-cathexis,” *Gegenbesetzung*). Freud, “Repression,” SE 14: 148 / GW 10: 250.

⁶² Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926), SE 20: 108-9; *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*, GW 14: 113-205; hereafter abbreviated as ISA. Freud repeats this argument in “Anxiety and Instinctual Life” (“Angst und Triebleben”), lecture 32 in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933), SE 22: 86; *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, GW 15, 92: “It was not the repression that created the anxiety; the anxiety was there earlier; it was the anxiety that made the repression.” [“Nicht die Verdrängung schafft die Angst, sondern die Angst ist früher da, die Angst macht die Verdrängung!”]

is well known, all of which are narratives of trauma depicting the threat of separation from a loved object. What Freud failed to imagine is the alternative that Kierkegaard had ironically suggested in *Either/Or*; that the same story about the development of the species and the individual could be told on the basis of boredom rather than anxiety.⁶³ Is it possible to imagine a boredom-based, rather than anxiety-based, psychoanalytic psychology? Taking Kierkegaard's irony seriously, I suggest that it is, but this requires a reconsideration of the category of the pathological and a cultivation of a new kind of compassion.

It is still left to clarify in what sense it can be said that modern boredom has its origins in religious anxiety. To this end, I shall consider in the remaining pages of this introduction the explanation, however general it may appear to be, that the experience of boredom was historically superseded by anxiety at the very moment in which it was first identified in the Western tradition as a problem that merits serious attention and calls for detailed psychological description and analysis. This arguably happened when leaders of the monastic movement of the early Christian era, while engaged in the scholarly practice, also common in the pre-Christian era, of enumerating and classifying the various vices, recognized a certain vice that had hardly been described as such before and at times even regarded it as the "most troublesome" of them all.⁶⁴ This vice is the cardinal

⁶³ Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, 286 (see below, 173-4). Cf. Nietzsche's boredom-based version of the story of the creation of the world in *The Antichrist*: "The old God, all 'spirit,' all high priest, all perfection, takes a pleasure stroll in his garden: except that he is bored. Against boredom the gods themselves fight in vain. What does he do? He invents man—man is entertaining..." ["Der alte Gott, ganz 'Geist,' ganz Hoherpriester, ganz Vollkommenheit, lustwandelt in seinem Garten: nur dass er sich langweilt. Gegen die Langeweile kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens. Was tut er? Er erfindet den Menschen, - der Mensch ist unterhalten..."]. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo and The Antichrist*, trans. Thomas Wayne (Algora Publishing, 2004), 152; *Der Antichrist: Versuch einer Kritik des Christentum* (Berlin: Vergangenheitsverlag, 2010), 48; original ellipsis.

⁶⁴ Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967). Kuhn, *Demon of Noontide*, 39-64; Andrew Crislip, "The Sin of Sloth or the

sin of acedia, which by telling deviation from the meaning of the original Greek *akēdeia*, *a-kedos*, carelessness (LSJ) or lack of care, is mostly known today as sloth.⁶⁵ Then it was referred to as the “demon of noontide,” which is mentioned in Psalms 91:6.⁶⁶ This demonic oppression, which at first had been regarded as a problem peculiar to hermits living in the desert but by the High Middle Ages was recognized as a threat to all Christians,⁶⁷ is often compared today to the modern experience of melancholia or depression rather than boredom.⁶⁸ Although contemporary scholars usually acknowledge the pertinence of modern boredom to the understanding of the historical phenomenon of acedia, they often regard boredom as merely a characteristic, or symptom, of acedia, rather than its modern counterpart. When in contemporary genealogical studies of boredom acedia is considered an ancient or medieval precursor of modern boredom, it is usually with respect to a more elevated form of boredom, specifically referred to as “ennui,” or to a more severe form of boredom, a “chronic” or “pathological” one (which in effect is indistinguishable from clinical depression), that such claims are usually being made.⁶⁹

Illness of the Demons? The Demon of Acedia in Early Christian Monasticism,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 2 (2005): 155 n. 1.

⁶⁵ On the association of acedia with sloth in English and the emergence of busyness as the corresponding virtue, see Wenzel, who argues that it was not a linear process, in *Sin of Sloth*, 89-91, 164-87.

⁶⁶ “the destruction that wasteth at noonday” (KJV). In Hebrew: “צִהָרִים יְשׁוּד מִקֶּטֶב”. This demon, usually transliterated as *Qeteb*, also appears in Deut. 32:24, Hos. 13:14, and Isa. 28:2. See Judit Blair, *De-Demonising the Old Testament: An Investigation of Azazel, Lilith, Deber, Qeteb and Reshef in the Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

⁶⁷ Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth*, 175; Stanley Jackson, “Acedia the Sin and Its Relationship to Sorrow and Melancholia,” in *Culture and Depression: Studies in the Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder*, eds. Arthur Kleinman and Byron Good (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 48.

⁶⁸ E.g., Jackson, “Acedia”; Crislip, “Sin of Sloth,” esp. 158 n. 90; and Robert Daly, “Before Depression: The Medieval Vice of Acedia,” *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes*, 70, no. 1 (2007): 30-51.

⁶⁹ E.g., Kuhn, *Demon of Noontide*, and Ian Irvine, “Acedia, Tristitia and Sloth: Early Christian Forerunners to Chronic Ennui,” *Humanitas* 12, no. 1 (1999): 89-103.

What underlies this scholarly inclination, I would like to suggest, is an assumption of continuity between the demons of monastic psychology and the “clinical entities” of modern psychiatry. Although it is undeniable that acedia bears a close resemblance to depression, especially in view of its semantic proximity to and at times even interchangeability with *tristitia* (sadness) in early and later Christian writings, a cursory examination of some of the early descriptions of acedia allows us to see that it is in fact closer to the common experience of modern boredom. For example, it is not unlikely that depression would be associated with the tendency to “yawn a lot.” However, this tendency, ascribed by Evagrius of Pontus (ca. 345-399) to the “one afflicted with acedia,” is more directly and commonly associated today with boredom.⁷⁰ Moreover, while clinical depression is usually associated with anhedonia and a disinclination to act or communicate,⁷¹ the hermits suffering from acedia are often described not as generally lethargic but only as inactive with respect to their duties, and hence as specifically “lazy” or “inertial.” Instead of the seclusion prescribed to them, due to which they had become exposed to acedia in the first place, they sought to reestablish contact with family members and friends and were eager to communicate and interact with other people. And although they tended to relinquish the responsibilities that had been assigned to them, they did not necessarily sink into passive despair but were often inclined to assume

⁷⁰ Evagrius of Pontus, *On the Eight Thoughts*, in *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, trans. Robert E. Sinkewicz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 84: “When he reads, the one afflicted with acedia yawns a lot and readily drifts off into sleep; he rubs his eyes and stretches his arms; turning his eyes away from the book, he stares at the wall and again goes back to reading for a while; leafing through the pages, he looks curiously for the end of texts, he counts the folios and calculates the number of gatherings.” In *On Thoughts* (ibid., 176), Evagrius explains the mechanism of the yawn: “But the demons provoke unnatural and prolonged yawning, and they make themselves small enough to touch the interior of the mouth. This phenomenon I have not understood to this day, though I have often experienced it, but I heard the holy Makarios speak to me about it and offer as proof the fact that those who yawn make the sign of the cross over the mouth according to an old and mysterious tradition.”

⁷¹ Thus one of the symptoms of major depressive disorder according to DSM 5 (160) is “Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day (as indicated by either subjective account or observation).”

alternative responsibilities, engage in alternative or more extreme forms of asceticism, practice charity, or become interested in gossip.⁷² Thus, although laziness (*inertia*) was certainly regarded as a prominent characteristic of acedia, acedia could just as well manifest itself in subversive and charismatic behavior, or in suchlike aspirations. Such opposing manifestations are also a distinctive characteristic of modern boredom.

On another level, the similarity between acedia and boredom consists in the fact that in both cases one lays the blame for one's suffering not on oneself, as often happens in depression,⁷³ but on one's environment (unlike anxiety, which has evolved as a form of patient, rather than agent, or active, complaint).⁷⁴ On a more fundamental level, what makes acedia and boredom essentially similar is that both are directly rooted in the experience of time. The absence of anxiety in boredom, in the form of guilt or in any other form, has already been touched upon. In Chapter 3, it will be clarified in what sense boredom is distinguishable from other feelings, including anxiety, hope, and despair; namely, in that boredom does not merely correspond to a certain experience of time but is temporal through and through. For our present purposes, however, it suffices to point out

⁷² These characterizations are based on John Cassian's description of acedia, which was widely received in the middle ages and is the primary source Thomas Aquinas draws on in his treatment of acedia in *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 35; see John Cassian, *The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York: Newman, 2000), 217-234.

⁷³ As noted above, another symptom of major depressive disorder according to DSM 5 (161) is "Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt (which may be delusional) nearly every day (not merely self-reproach or guilt about being sick)." The association between guilt and melancholia was likewise common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Jackson "Acedia," 44.

⁷⁴ Thus Cassian (*Institutes*, 219) describes the monk possessed by acedia as follows: "He groans quite frequently that spending such a long time there [in his cell] is of no profit to him and that he will possess no spiritual fruit for as long as he is attached to that group of people. He complains and sighs, lamenting that he is bereft and void of all spiritual gain in that place inasmuch as, even though he is capable of directing others and of being useful to many, he is edifying no one and being of no help to anyone through his instruction and teaching." Similarly, as noted above, contemporary developmental psychologist Richard Bargdill, in his attempt to raise awareness of the phenomenon of "life boredom," distinguishes between this condition and the more familiar chronic condition of depression by emphasizing the fact that the participants of his study (all of whom reported feelings of being "bored with their life") are mostly "over-confident" and tend to "over-estimate their abilities." Bargdill, "Study of Life Boredom," 202.

that aside from the characteristic yawning, laziness, curiosity, subversiveness, and tendency to complain, which we find in both ancient acedia and modern boredom, both of these experiences share the characteristic tendency to constantly check the time, as if in an attempt to hasten its pace. This peculiar tendency is analyzed by Heidegger through a detailed phenomenological interpretation of the familiar compulsion of the modern railway passenger to constantly look at her watch while waiting for a train.⁷⁵ Despite the dangers of anachronism, it is safe to assume that when John Cassian (ca. 360-435) tells us that the ancient Christian monk who suffers from acedia is someone who “constantly . . . looks at the sun as if it were too slow in setting,”⁷⁶ he refers to the same psychological tendency, although the monk and the commuter expect different things.

Unlike boredom, however, acedia is not a form of expression but a diagnostic category. It describes and can be ascribed, but it does not express. The monk suffering from acedia could complain about various things; and inasmuch as there must be a sense in which it is correct to assume that boredom is ahistorical,⁷⁷ a universal feature of human, and perhaps even also animal, life, or at least that as a form of expression, it primarily belongs to the colloquial or even to the nonverbal and therefore to the largely undocumented aspects of human history, that monk must have had at his disposal, aside from the capacity to yawn, certain words or gestures, equivalent to the Latin *tedium*, to express his discontent with his monastic life. Such a monk, however, could not use the technical term “acedia” as a form of complaint. The moment he realized that his condition was describable in terms of acedia, he also recognized that he had committed a

⁷⁵ FCM 96-98 / 146-147.

⁷⁶ Cassian, *Institutes*, 221.

⁷⁷ Peter Toohey pursues this argument in his *Boredom: A Lively History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 143-169.

sin. Unlike modern boredom, but also unlike modern psychiatric clinical entities, the demon of noontide was meant to be frightening.⁷⁸ It was a category created in order to drive boredom away, rather than a means to express it, to let it be—or as Heidegger would have it, to let it remain awake.⁷⁹ Boredom, on the other hand, can only be experienced and expressed inasmuch as it is *no longer* regarded, at least *by* the individual experiencing it and *while* she experiences it, as a sin. Yet the classification of boredom as a sin was the occasion on which it was first acknowledged that boredom should be taken seriously, that its manifestations should be carefully observed and depicted, and that it should be treated as a phenomenon in its own right.

In this sense, modern boredom originates in religious anxiety. The evolution of this anxiety about boredom can be viewed from a broad historical perspective in light of Weber's widely influential and yet contested disenchantment thesis.⁸⁰ Describing the persistence of the "spirit of monastic asceticism" by showing how it was transformed by the Reformation, rather than overcome by it, to reappear as the "spirit of capitalism," Weber provides an account of the persistence of religious anxiety from late antiquity onwards.⁸¹ In light of Weber's thesis, it can be seen that acedia, the sin of not caring,

⁷⁸ The psychological depth of the ancient observations of acedia should not be underestimated, however. Acedia was not conceived of as a danger in order to induce the monk to flee from it in terror. On the contrary, Cassian thought that the triumph over acedia could only be a "triumph by endurance," and that, as he further writes in the concluding sentence of his description of acedia (*Institutes*, 234), "an onslaught of acedia must not be avoided by flight but overcome through resistance." Nonetheless, insofar as acedia is considered a vice or a sin, its concept necessarily involves anxiety.

⁷⁹ FCM 78-80 / 117-119.

⁸⁰ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 2005);

Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *The Vocation Lectures*, eds. David Owen and Tracy Strong (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004).

⁸¹ The explanation of modern social processes on the basis of anxiety, whether implicit or explicit, is by no means uniquely Weberian. For an overview and critical appraisal of a wide range of social theories utilizing anxiety-based explanation, see Alan Hunt, "Anxiety and Social Explanation: Some Anxieties about Anxiety," *Journal of Social History*, 32, no. 3 (1999): 509-528. However, the stress on the continuity of the

often considered the most troublesome among the cardinal sins, was transformed by the Reformation into the sin of time wasting, which Puritan scholar Richard Baxter (1615-1691) considered “the first and in principle the deadliest of sins.”⁸² The emotional vice was thus replaced by a behavioral one, sloth, one of the *symptoms* of acedia.⁸³ Unlike acedia, originally conceived of as sin and sickness, sloth was considered sinful but not pathological; it was conceived regardless of its corresponding passion, or more specifically, by not taking that passion seriously any longer.

The anxiety about boredom has persisted, however, despite the invalidation of the category of sin during the next and most recent phase of the historical transformations of the spirit of monastic asceticism according to Weber—the phase in which this distinctly Western spirit has reappeared in its most secularized form and most clearly in the United States, where, as Weber writes, “The pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions, which often give it the character of sport.”⁸⁴ In Freudian terms, although the insight here is no less Weberian, the anxiety underlying religious practices is consistent with the anxiety underlying obsessions and compulsions,⁸⁵ including the compulsion, not usually considered abnormal, to accumulate wealth as if it were an end in itself. In both cases, as Freud has taught us,⁸⁶ the anxiety remains unexpressed, unless one fails to perform, or unless the fear that this will happen is somehow instilled in one’s mind. When anxiety is

anxieties of the modern economic order with the specific anxieties of the Christian faith, going all the way back to monastic asceticism, is uniquely, though of course still not exclusively, Weberian.

⁸² Quoted in Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 104.

⁸³ In its own right this process was not linear and it can be traced back to the late and high Middle Ages (see Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth*, 89-91, 164-187); however, as interrelated with worries about time wasting, this process is arguably distinctly modern.

⁸⁴ Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 124.

⁸⁵ Freud, “Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices” (1907), SE 9: 115-128; “Zwangshandlungen und Religionsübungen,” GW 7: 129-139.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, SE 9: 117-118.

expressed and can no longer be ignored—that is, when one fails to perform, to keep oneself busy—it is identified in various pathological forms: in the form of a mood disorder, such as depression, in which anxiety is often presented in the shape of guilt;⁸⁷ or more directly, in the form of an anxiety disorder, including obsessive compulsive disorders (which is arguably a radicalized form of normalcy); or in the form of a “trauma- or stressor-related disorder,” a category which, recently differentiated from that of anxiety disorders,⁸⁸ has long been associated with modernity; but also in the form of “substance-related and addictive disorders” (including gambling disorder), in which, as in the case of obsessive compulsive disorders, the anxiety is left unexpressed unless the practice or pattern is interrupted.

But boredom has also persisted and proliferated. Since the moral focus shifted from emotion to behavior, from acedia to sloth, it has been forgotten that the anxiety that generates the economy, considered normal when suppressed and pathological when expressed, is originally anxiety about boredom. Boredom has thus been decoupled from anxiety. No longer considered a sin, it is not considered an illness. Indeed, it is no longer been considered seriously at all. But precisely because of that, it could extend so widely and appear so distinctly, that is, as something distinct from anxiety.

In spite of the criticism leveled against it, Weber’s thesis is valid and relevant. In order to complement his thesis and account for the phenomenon of consumption, the aspect of capitalism that it underemphasizes, one should consider not only how the

⁸⁷ DSM 5, 161.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 265-290. For a discussion, see Lori Zoellner et al., “PTSD Not an Anxiety Disorder? DSM Committee Proposal Turns Back the Hands of Time,” *Depression and Anxiety*, 28, 10 (2011): 853-856; Matthew Friedman et al., “Classification of Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders in DSM-5,” *Depression and Anxiety* 28 (2011): 737-749; Andrew Levin et al., “DSM-5 and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law* 42 (2014): 146-158.

concepts of guilt and anxiety have become pathological through the invalidation of the category of sin, but also how boredom has emerged, decoupled from sinfulness, guilt, and anxiety, as a state of mind that can be endured, expressed, tolerated, and even praised.

My broader suggestion in this dissertation is that boredom should be taken seriously. This does not mean that it should be regarded as a form of mental illness or as a moral problem, but that it should be recognized as a passion, as a form of suffering, and hence as an experience which calls for compassion and empathy—if only so that one would not have to complain about anxiety or become anxious when one is in fact bored, even if one is no longer a child. That boredom has indeed been considered more and more seriously is evident from the growing attention that it has received from scholars in various disciplines and fields in the late modern period. Voices that praise boredom, identifying it as a moral or civic virtue, are also being heard.⁸⁹ The scholarly attention to boredom and its literary appraisal, however, are late modern phenomena in their own right. Boredom has been on the increase and society has become increasingly aware of boredom. That boredom should be taken seriously is not a new claim. What is new in my suggestion is that the expansion of boredom should be considered as part of an historical process that has anxiety as its origin. In this way, we will perhaps be able to better understand why society stopped taking boredom seriously in the first place, and what it has been taking seriously instead.

⁸⁹ Especially noteworthy in this respect are these two influential commencement addresses: Joseph Brodsky's 1995 Dartmouth College commencement address, "In Praise of Boredom," in Joseph Brodsky, *On Grief and Reason: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995), 104-113; and David Foster Wallace's 2005 Kenyon College commencement address, "This Is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, about Living a Compassionate Life," (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009).

Part I: The Secularization of Kierkegaard's Concept of Anxiety and the Transition from Anxiety to Boredom in Heidegger's Thought

Chapter 1: The Hypothesis

In this and the following two chapters, I would like to propose a reading of Heidegger's notion of boredom (*Langeweile*) as a secularized form of his notion of anxiety (*Angst*).¹ In parallel, through the study of this theoretical transition from anxiety, especially as it is analyzed in the 1927 book *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*),² to boredom, as it is interpreted in the 1929/30 lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (*Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, published in 1983),³ I would like to

¹ References are given to the English translation as well as to the original German text of Heidegger's works. The page number of the translation is followed by that of the original and separated from the latter by a slash. Translations have often been modified. All translation modifications are indicated except for the lowercasing of abstract nouns such as "being," "self," "falling," "interpretation," etc. I also generally refrain from capitalizing the word "being" even though this is a common practice in the literature on Heidegger's work because (a) it is unclear to me how this sign adds to the already nuanced distinction between being and beings, and (b) capitalization in English implies not only nominalization but also uniqueness. Heidegger may well think, like Spinoza, that being is unique, but for both authors, the meaning of uniqueness does not involve a possible relation to an other—that is, other substance in the case of Spinoza, and a being that is not always already mine in the case of Heidegger. Whatever the relation between being and its name, its name should not be mistaken for a proper name, and however unique being itself may be, this is not as readily apparent in the form *Sein*. Likewise, I will refrain from capitalizing the word "nothing" as this would necessitate an account of why "something," "everything," or "nature" are not capitalized.

² I will also take into consideration the two most important accounts of anxiety that Heidegger provides in the immediate years preceding and following the publication of *Being and Time*. The first is to be found in chapter 4 (especially §30) of the 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20 (1994 [1979]); hereafter HCT. The other account of anxiety is to be found in Heidegger's 1929 lecture "What Is Metaphysics?," trans. David Krell in *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 88ff.; "Was ist Metaphysik?" in *Wegmarken* GA 9 (2013 [1976]), 111ff. In the next chapter, I discuss the transformation of anxiety into the terror, fright, and horror (*Schrecken, Erschrecken, Entsetzen*) of the 1930s and the "other beginning" of philosophy. References to Heidegger's treatment of fear and anxiety prior to 1925 are given in a note below in this chapter.

³ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (1929/30), trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit*, GA 29/30 (2010 [1983]); hereafter FCM. As we shall see, Heidegger does not provide us with another account of boredom. To explain why this is the case is one of the goals of the current chapters. Heidegger does nonetheless mention the philosophical significance of boredom on a few other occasions: only once prior to the winter semester of 1929, i.e., in "What Is

propose the hypothesis that this transition belongs not only to the intellectual history of the development of Heidegger's thought in the later years of the Weimar Republic, but also to the social and cultural history, or what I would like to call emotional history, of late modernity. The goal of these chapters is therefore twofold, textual and contextual. But while the sources I examine in these chapters may support the claim concerning the development of Heidegger's thought, only in chapters 4 and 5 will I consider a concrete sociohistorical implication that may be associated with this development, namely, the exclusion of boredom from the diagnostic discourse of psychopathology. At this stage, the sociohistorical claim is, strictly speaking, hypothetical. However, given the prominence, wide reception, and popularization of Heidegger's philosophy, as well as the charismatic qualities of his philosophical persona—or what Jürgen Habermas describes as the “appeal” (*Appel*) of his philosophizing⁴—it seems justifiable to already insist upon the idea that the development of Heidegger's phenomenology of moods, as here depicted, is indicative or expressive of wider social processes.

* * *

Heidegger's concepts of anxiety and boredom are similar in many respects. Both of them are forms of *Stimmung*, a notion that is usually translated as mood, attunement, or atmosphere and that designates, as adequately captured by each of these English terms,

Metaphysics?” (87 / 110), and on a few other occasions in the 1930s and thereafter, see chapter 2, footnote 60.

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, “Zur Veröffentlichung von Vorlesungen aus dem Jahre 1935,” in *Philosophisch-politische Profile* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), 70; Originally published as “Mit Heidegger gegen Heidegger denken” in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on July 25, 1953. Translated by William Lewis as “Martin Heidegger: On the Publication of the Lectures of 1935” in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge: MIT, 1998), 195. I further discuss this essay in the next chapter, where I consider Hebermas' claim regarding the 1929 “invasion of ideology” into Heidegger's philosophizing. See Habermas, “Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective,” trans. John McCumber, *Critical Inquiry* 15 (1989), 439-443.

the “in-between,” at once internal and external, character of these phenomena.⁵ At once, the world and the self are rendered openable (*offenbar*) in the moods;⁶ and both anxiety and boredom are specifically qualified by Heidegger as *basic* or *fundamental* moods, that is, as *Grundstimmungen*,⁷ since they are “*outstanding possibilities of such openability*” (“*ausgezeichnete Möglichkeiten solcher Offenbarkeit*”; FCM 283 / 411; trans. modified) or “disclosedness” (*Erschlossenheit*; BT 228 / 184).

What makes anxiety and boredom such outstanding possibilities reveals yet further similarities. As with any other mood, anxiety and boredom are not mere side effects or epiphenomena (*Begleiterscheinungen*; FCM 66 / 100) but essential characteristics of existence, phenomena in their own right. As with any other mood, the

⁵ BT 176 / 136: “[The mood] comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside,’ but arises out of being-in-the-world, as a way of such being.” [“<Die Stimmung> kommt weder von ‘Außen’ noch von ‘Innen,’ sondern steigt als Weise des In-der-Welt-seins aus diesem selbst auf.”]; FCM 88 / 132: “boredom—and thus ultimately every attunement—is a hybrid, partly objective, partly subjective.” [“Die Langeweile—und so am Ende jede Stimmung—ist ein Zwitterwesen, teils objektiv, teils subjektiv.”]. However, it is important to stress in this regard that Heidegger also wants to somehow reject the notion of *intersubjectivity*, for instance when he states in *Being and Time* (170 / 132): “The ‘between’ is already conceived as the result of the *convenientia* of two things that are present-at-hand” [“Das Zwischen ist schon als Resultat der *convenientia* zweier Vorhandenen begriffen.”]

⁶ In *Being and Time* (176 / 137), Heidegger speaks of the moods as a “basic existential species” of the “equiprimordial disclosedness” (*gleichursprüngliche Erschlossenheit*) of “the world, Dasein-with, and existence” [“eine existenziale Grundart der *gleichursprünglichen Erschlossenheit* von Welt, Mitdasein und Existenz”]. This tripartite designation (world, Dasein-with, and existence) appears to correspond to the constitutive moments of being-in-the-world, which are world, being in, and the self (235 / 190). Later in the text (263 / 220), while presenting his notion of truth as disclosedness, Heidegger reminds us that, “Disclosedness is constituted by affectedness, understanding, and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to the world, to being-in, and to the self.” [“Erschlossenheit wird durch Befindlichkeit, Verstehen und Rede konstituiert und betrifft gleichursprünglich die Welt, das In-Sein und das Selbst.”] A similar idea is presented in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (238 / 410), but there one finds a dual, rather than triple, disclosedness: “In attunement we *are* in such and such a way: this therefore implies that attunement precisely makes *beings as a whole* manifest and makes us manifest to ourselves as disposed in the midst of these beings.” [“In der Stimmung *ist* einem so und so—darin liegt also: Die Stimmung macht gerade *das Seiende im Ganzen* und uns selbst als inmitten desselben befindlich offenbar.”]

⁷ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger mostly uses the notion of *Grundbefindlichkeit* (basic affectedness) rather than *Grundstimmung* (basic mood) to describe *Angst* (e.g., 179 / 140), but these terms are interchangeable, and on at least one occasion in *Being and Time* (358 / 310), Heidegger also uses the word *Grundstimmung* to describe anxiety—as well as the “unshakeable joy” (*gerüstete Freude*) that “comes along” (*zusammengehen*) with it. Regarding joy, cf. Heidegger’s brief remark in “What Is Metaphysics?”, 87 / 118.

essence of anxiety and boredom consists in this that they are both ways of being⁸ or, more specifically, ways in which beings such as human beings are.⁹ But unlike many other moods, the way in which being is specifically determined in both anxiety and boredom involves the experience of an absence.¹⁰ In each case, this is so in a dual sense and in a peculiar (*eigentlich*) way. On the one hand, there is in both cases the absence of a cause, a detrimental or boring object,¹¹ and, on the other hand, there is in both cases

⁸ FCM 67 / 101: “An attunement is a way, not merely a form or a mode, but a way—in the sense of a melody that does not merely hover over the so-called proper being at hand of man, but that sets the tone for such being, i.e., attunes and determines the manner and way of his being.” [“Eine Stimmung ist eine Weise, nicht bloß eine Form oder ein Modus, sondern eine Weise im Sinne einer Melodie, die nicht über dem sogenannten eigentlichen Vorhandensein des Menschen schwebt, sondern für dieses Sein den Ton angibt, d. h. die Art und das Wie seines Seins stimmt und bestimmt.”]

⁹ Like any other mood, both anxiety and boredom open up the world, or what Heidegger calls “beings as a whole” (*das Seiende im Ganzen*; BT 176 / 137, 225-27 / 181-82; FCM 238 / 410), and since, according to Heidegger, only human beings have a world—unlike animals, which are “poor in world,” and stones, which are “worldless” (FCM 176ff. / 261ff.)—only human beings can be in moods such as anxiety or boredom, that is, experience their being-in-the-world in an altogether meaningless way, or be “indifferent” (*gleichgültig*) to their being (cf. Derrida, *Of Spirit*, 19). Thus in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (282 / 409), Heidegger says that the essence of animality (which is captivity; *Benommenheit*) appears to be “in the closest proximity” (*nächste Nähe*) to profound boredom, but that this is a “deception” that only shows that there is an abyss separating the essence of animality from that of humanity. For a discussion of this crucial paragraph, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 61-70. However, the distinction that Heidegger draws between human beings, animals, and inanimate objects should not be taken at face value, for in drawing such distinctions, Heidegger primarily wants to tell us something about being, or, as in this case, the phenomenon of the world, rather than merely confirm traditional ontological taxonomies. Thus in *History of the Concept of Time* (255 / 352), Heidegger states that a stone, since it is merely present-at-hand, is never subject to affection, or “situatedness,” that it “never finds itself.” [“Ein Stein befindet sich nie, sondern ist lediglich vorhanden.”]. However, rather than man, the counterexample that Heidegger gives in this regard is a “very primitive unicellular form of life” [“ein ganz primitives einzelliges Lebewesen dagegen wird sich schon befinden”]. Unless one concedes that Heidegger is primarily interested in difference itself and not in that which is differentiated by the difference, one would have troubles explaining this assertion in view of the fact that the existential moment of *Befindlichkeit* (affectedness) is worked out in both *History of the Concept of Time* (253 / 349) and *Being and Time* (172 / 134) as constitutive of the very “there” (“*Da*”) of *Dasein* and as a structural moment that is indissolubly connected with understanding (*Verstehen*) and discourse (*Rede*). In *Being and Time* (172 / 133), Heidegger uses the notion of “equiprimordially” (*Gleichursprünglich*) to describe the relation between affectedness, understanding, and discourse as constitutive moments of the “there” (172 / 133). Thus inasmuch as Heidegger is nonetheless concerned with the difference between the various kinds of being, he is committed to the view that this difference manifests itself equally in the capacities to feel, understand, and use language.

¹⁰ As we shall see, Heidegger is also concerned with other interrelated moods that involve the experience of absence, such as mourning and homesickness.

¹¹ Thus Heidegger considers anxiety more profound than fear (*Furcht*), i.e., not merely a *Befindlichkeit* but a *Grundbefindlichkeit*, because anxiety does not involve the perception of a threat as something that is present at hand (BT 230 / 185-86); and likewise, the second and third forms of boredom are more profound than the first one because they are not experienced in relation to identifiable boring objects in one’s

an absence that is involved in the occurrence of a certain failure to engage with the world. In anxiety, it is the failure to draw significance from all that which is encountered in the world (*das innerweltlich Begegnende*); in boredom, it is the failure to synchronize with one's surroundings.¹² In this dual sense, it can be said that both anxiety and boredom are modes of experiencing the nothing, or nothingness,¹³ a nothingness that becomes obtrusive due to the absence of an identifiable or objectifiable cause and that may manifest itself as a lack of significance for being-in-the-world or as emptiness that comes from within the self. Accordingly, although we usually primarily associate boredom rather than anxiety with notions such as indifference, meaninglessness, or insignificance,¹⁴ these notions are at the core of Heidegger's account of anxiety.¹⁵ And

surroundings, or in relation to a certain situation, but rather have the character of "*I know not what*" ("*ich weiß nicht was*"; FCM 114 / 172).

¹² As Heidegger explains (and as Koheleth already taught us), this failure (i.e., the failure of synchronization) is only possible because (and therefore shows that) "each thing... has *its* time." ["Die Langeweile ist überhaupt nur möglich, weil jedes Ding... *seine* Zeit hat."] (FCM 105 / 159).

¹³ HCT 290-91 / 401-2; BT 356 / 308, 393 / 343; FCM 97 / 146. In its most radical form, this idea is to be found in "What Is Metaphysics?" (88 / 111), where Heidegger presents anxiety as the mood "in which man is brought before the nothing itself" ["ein... Gestimmtsein, in dem er <Mensch> vor das Nichts selbst gebracht wird"]. It is true that in FCM 140 / 210, Heidegger stresses that emptiness is "*not* the *Nothing*" ["*nicht* das *Nichts*"], but regarding anxiety, too, Heidegger speaks of "the existential positivity of the nothing of anxiety" ["die existenziale Positivität des nichts der Angst"].

¹⁴ Meaning is one of the notions most frequently discussed antithetically to boredom in the psychological and sociological literature on boredom, e.g.: Fahlman, "Does a Lack of Life Meaning Cause Boredom?"; Jack M. Barbalet, "Boredom and Social Meaning," *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (1999), 631-646; Klapp, *Inflation of Symbols*; Klapp, *Overload and Boredom*; Sanford L. Drob and Harold S. Bernard, "The Bored Patient: A Developmental/Existential Perspective," in *Psychotherapy and the Bored Patient*, ed. Mark Stern (Binghamton: Haworth, 1988), 63-75; Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*; Zijderfeld, *On Clichés*.

¹⁵ Thus in the first division of *Being and Time*, the notion of insignificance (*Unbedeutsamkeit*; 230-31 / 186-87) plays a central role. In particular, Heidegger speaks there of the "utter insignificance which makes itself known in the 'nothing and nowhere,' [and which] does not signify that the world is absent, but tells us that entities within-the-world are of so little importance in themselves that on the basis of this *insignificance* of what is within-the-world, the world in its worldhood is all that still obtrudes itself." ["Die völlige Unbedeutsamkeit, die sich im Nichts und Nirgends bekundet, bedeutet nicht Weltabwesenheit, sondern besagt, daß das innerweltlich Seiende an ihm selbst so völlig belanglos ist, daß auf dem Grunde dieser *Unbedeutsamkeit* des Innerweltlichen die Welt in ihrer Weltlichkeit sich einzig noch aufdrängt."]. BT 231 / 187. This idea goes back at least to the 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time*, where Heidegger equates *Bedeutsamkeit* (translated by Kisiel as meaningfulness) with *Bedrohlichkeit* (threateningness, or as Kisiel has it, "threatening character"; 254-55 / 351. This idea is reiterated in *Being and Time*, but with the crucial difference that now *Bedrohlichkeit* is presented as a mere *example* for the way in which things that we encounter in the world potentially matter to us. BT 176 / 137. In "What Is Metaphysics?" (88 / 111), Heidegger utilizes the notion of indifference (*Gleichgültigkeit*) to describe

while we usually think of anxiety, but not of boredom, as something that can happen suddenly, for Heidegger, boredom, at least in its more profound manifestations, is something that happens “all of a sudden” (“mit einem Schlag”).¹⁶ Likewise, although we usually do not think of facing boredom or of facing boring objects, situations, or life experiences, in terms of courage (*Mut*), Heidegger speaks of both anxiety and boredom in such terms (BT 298 / 254; FCM 79 / 117, 167 / 248). In both cases, one’s failure (*Versagen*) tries to tell (*sagen*) one something that one usually does not want to hear or know (FCM 136 / 204). In both cases, the message that the mood conveys is what Heidegger calls the “innermost necessity of the freedom of Dasein” (“innerste Notwendigkeit der Freiheit des Daseins”; FCM 166 / 247; italics omitted), a message whose understanding coincides with the “moment,” or “moment of vision”

anxiety: “All things and we ourselves sink into indifference.” [“Alle Dinge und wir selbst versinken in eine Gleichgültigkeit.”] It is of significance, however, that in Heidegger’s account of boredom a greater emphasis is placed on emptiness than on meaninglessness—especially on “being-left-empty” (*Leergelassenheit*; FCM 139 / 210), which is one of the two structural moments of boredom (the other one being “being-held-in-suspense”; *Hingehaltenheit*; FCM 211 / 140). A similar idea is nonetheless also to be found in the second division of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger defines guilt as “being-the-basis of a nullity” (*Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*; 329 / 283), a nullity that, on the one hand, is “the basis for the possibility of inauthentic Dasein in its falling” (331 / 285) and, on the other hand, signifies the possibility of authentic being-toward-death (354 / 306). As we shall see, both death and the dialectics of authenticity and inauthenticity are absent from Heidegger’s account of boredom; and this arguably indicates that in boredom, Dasein understands itself (authentically) as the basis of the nullity of every moment of its existence and not necessarily, or not only, as the basis of the “utter nullity” (*schlechthinige Nichtigkeit*; 354 / 306) of its anticipated death.

¹⁶ Thus in the anxiety of *Being and Time* (233 / 189), “Everyday familiarity collapses.” [“Die alltägliche Vertrautheit bricht in sich zusammen.”] Heidegger explains this change by appeal to the notion of uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*; *ibid.*), which precisely designates the sudden rendering strange and threatening of the ordinary. Cf. HCT 287-88 / 397-98. Regarding profound boredom (the third form of boredom), Heidegger writes in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (138 / 207-8): “all of a sudden everything is enveloped and embraced by... indifference.” [“mit einem Schlag wird alles und jedes gleichgültig, alles und jedes rückt in einem zumal in eine Gleichgültigkeit zusammen.”] Even the supposedly less profound, second form of boredom happens at once, in a moment of realization: “I was bored after all this evening, on the occasion of this invitation.” [“Ich habe mich eigentlich doch gelangweilt, an dem Abend, bei dieser Einladung.”] One should therefore be careful not to distinguish between Heidegger’s concepts of anxiety and boredom on this basis, though this could have pointed in the direction of a compelling line of interpretation, as suggested by Parvis Emad in “Boredom as Limit and Disposition,” *Heidegger Studies* 1 (1985), 68.

(*Augenblick*),¹⁷ and with the possibility of authentic resolution (*Entschlossenheit*).¹⁸

Finally, as one manages to face this affective challenge, and because both the meaning of having a self and the meaning of having a world are at once undermined in both anxiety

¹⁷ *Augenblick*, literally “twinkling of an eye,” can also be rendered as “instant.” This word is used by Luther in his translation of 1 Corinthians 15:52: “We shall all be changed, in a moment [*atomoî*], in the twinkling of an eye [*ripe ophthalmou*].” [Luther: “plötzlich, in einem Augenblick”]. According to David Daube, the expression *ripe ophthalmou* is a “hapax legomenon, met nowhere else either in the Bible or any other writing,” and it corresponds to the Hebrew phrase *hereph ‘ayin*. Daube also suggests that corresponding to *atomon*, which frequently occurs in Aristotle’s account of change in *Physics*, is the Hebrew *regha’*. See Daube, *The Sudden in the Scriptures* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 75-77. It is in reference to this “poetic paraphrase” of Paul that Kierkegaard writes in *The Concept of Anxiety* (88): “the moment is not properly an atom of time but an atom of eternity.” Heidegger alludes to this Kierkegaardian statement when in *Being and Time* (497 n. 3 / 338 n. 1) he says about Kierkegaard that “He clings to the ordinary conception of time, and defines the ‘moment of vision’ with the help of ‘now’ and ‘eternity.’ [“Er bleibt am vulgären Zeitbegriff haften und bestimmt den Augenblick mit Hilfe von Jetzt und Ewigkeit.”]. See also Otto Pöggeler, “Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Politics,” in *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics*, eds. Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 126.

¹⁸ BT 232-33 / 188:

Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-being—that is, its *being-free* for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself. Anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its *being-free for* (*propensio in...*) the authenticity of its being, and for this authenticity as a possibility which it always is. But at the same time, this is the being to which Dasein as being-in-the-world has been delivered over.

[Die Angst offenbart im Dasein das *Sein zum* eigensten Seinkönnen, das heißt das *Freisein für* die Freiheit des Sich-selbst-wählens und -ergreifens. Die Angst bringt das Dasein vor sein *Freisein für...* (*propensio in...*) die Eigentlichkeit seines Seins als Möglichkeit, die es immer schon ist. Dieses Sein aber ist es zugleich, dem das Dasein als In-der-Welt-sein überantwortet ist.]

In the second division of *Being and Time* (311 / 266, 394-95 / 344), Heidegger conceives of this freedom in terms of “freedom towards death” (*Freiheit zum Tode*), of resolution (*Entschlossenheit*), and of the moment (*Augenblick*). In *The Fundamental concepts of Metaphysics* (148-49 / 223), Heidegger likewise writes regarding profound boredom:

Yet whatever that which entrances as such [*das Bannende als solches*], namely time, announces and tells of as something in fact refused; what it precisely holds before us as something that has apparently vanished; what it gives to be known and properly makes possible as *something possible* and only as this, as something that *can be given to be free*; what it *gives to be free* in its telling announcing—is nothing less than *the freedom of Dasein* as such. The self-liberation of Dasein, however, only happens in each case if Dasein *resolutely discloses* itself to itself, i.e., discloses itself for itself as Da-sein.

[Was aber das Bannende als solches, die Zeit, als zwar gerade Versagtes ansagt, als gleichsam Entschwundenes doch gerade vorhält, als *Mögliches* und nur als das, als *Freigebbares* zu wissen gibt und eigentlich ermöglicht, was es ansagend *frei gibt*, ist nichts Geringeres als die *Freiheit des Daseins* als solche. Denn diese Freiheit des Daseins ist nur im *Sichbefreien* des Daseins. Das Sichbefreien des Daseins geschieht aber je nur, wenn es sich *zu sich selbst entschließt*, d. h. für sich als das Da-sein sich erschließt.]

and boredom, both of these moods are considered by Heidegger in terms of *individualization (Vereinzelung)*.¹⁹

¹⁹ BT 232-35 / 187-91, cf. 62 / 38; FCM 143 / 215; cf. Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1928/29), GA 27 (2001 [1996]), 334). Regarding *Being and Time*, I follow here Macquarrie and Robinson, who translate “*Vereinzelung*” as “individualization.” I do so—in spite of Heidegger’s strictly formal use of this notion, and even though *Vereinzelung* can perhaps also be rendered as “isolation,” “singularization,” “individuation,” or “separation”—in order to highlight the affinity, which I discuss in more detail below, between Heidegger’s *Dasein* and Kierkegaard’s individual (*Individ*). Though this is a suggestion that, as we shall see below, has often been made by Heidegger scholars, it is important to remember that it is at odds with Heidegger’s own reading of himself as well as with the charitable interpretation of commentators such as Pöggeler, according to whom, “Die Existenz im Sinne von *Sein und Zeit* ist überhaupt nicht, mögen auch die verwandten Begriffe zu dieser Meinung verführen können, auf den Einzelnen im Sinne Kierkegaards festzulegen.” Pöggeler refers to three places where Heidegger clarifies his notions of individualization or selfhood to such an effect. These can be found in (a) the 1929 lecture “On the Essence of Ground,” trans. William McNeill, in *Pathmarks*, 108-9 (“Vom Wesen des Grundes” in *Wegmarken*, GA 9, 2013 [1976], 138-39); (b) the 1935 lecture course *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press; *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 1983 [1953], 31); and (c) Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s “loneliest loneliness” (“*einsamste Einsamkeit*”) in his 1937 lecture course “The Eternal Recurrence of the Same” (“Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen”), see his *Nietzsche: Volume I and II*, trans. David Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), vol. II, 24; *Nietzsche: Erster Band* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), 275. See Otto Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1990 [1963]), 420 n. 32. One of the relevant passages from *Being and Time* reads (232 / 187):

Anxiety throws *Dasein* back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world. Anxiety individualizes *Dasein* for its ownmost being-in-the-world, which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities. Therefore, with that which it is anxious about, anxiety discloses *Dasein* as *being-possible*, and indeed as the only kind of thing which it can be of its own accord as something individualized in individualization.

[<Die Angst> wirft das *Dasein* auf das zurück, worum es sich ängstet, sein eigentliches In-der-Welt-sein-können. Die Angst vereinzelt das *Dasein* auf sein eigenstes In-der-Welt-sein, das als verstehendes wesenhaft auf Möglichkeiten sich entwirft. Mit dem Worum des Sich-ängstens erschließt daher die Angst das *Dasein* als *Möglichsein* und zwar als das, das es einzig von ihm selbst her als vereinzelt in der *Vereinzelung* sein kann.]

In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger employs the word “*Vereinzelung*” interchangeably with “*Einsamkeit*.” The word “*Einsamkeit*” appears in the title of this lecture course and is considered there one of the three fundamental concepts of metaphysics, alongside those of finitude and world. McNeill and Walker render *Vereinzelung* as “individuation” (e.g., FCM 5 / 6). According to Parvis Emad (“Boredom,” 66), Heidegger’s “analysis of boredom is not concerned with its occurrence among individuals.” However, not only is the individualizing, or individuating, effect of boredom alluded to in the very title under which it is analyzed, it is also explicitly described on several occasions within the text. Next to the passage just quoted from *Being and Time*, it is worth quoting the following passage from the analysis of the third form of boredom (FCM 143 / 215). Heidegger considers here the question “for whom” (“*Wem?*”) it is boring in this kind of boredom, that is, who the “one” is who is referred to in the sentence “it is boring for one” (“*es ist einem langweilig*”). Having eliminated some of the possible answers to this question, Heidegger writes:

Not for me as me, not for me with these particular prospective intentions and so on. For the nameless and undetermined I, then? No, but presumably for the self whose name, status and the like have become irrelevant, and which is itself drawn into indifference. Yet the self of *Dasein* that

In sum, Heidegger's concepts of anxiety and boredom both designate basic moods that are determined by (a) the absence of a determinable cause, (b) the occurrence of a failure to engage with the world (failure of meaning formation or of synchronization), and (c) the experience of nothingness, which can be understood in terms of both emptiness and meaninglessness. In addition, (d) both anxiety and boredom happen suddenly, (e) it takes courage to properly experience each of these moods, and (f-g) both of them unveil the necessity of one's freedom and have the capacity to individualize.

These similarities notwithstanding, however, Heidegger never explains anxiety and boredom in terms of or in relation to each other. He lectures on boredom in great length only two years following the publication of *Being and Time*. He starts preparing these lectures in the summer of 1929, directly following his inaugural speech as a professor at the University of Freiburg, "What Is Metaphysics?" ("Was ist Metaphysik?" written in 1928)—where for the first time in his published works he conceives of boredom as a basic philosophical mood.²⁰ It is true that Heidegger mentions boredom only briefly in this text, and that he does that almost directly before he introduces his more elaborated discussion of the basic mood of anxiety, a discussion that leads him to his answer to the question that is announced in the title of this famous deliberation about

is becoming irrelevant in all this does not thereby lose its determinacy, but rather the reverse, for this peculiar impoverishment which sets in with respect to ourselves in this "it is boring for one" first *brings* the *self* in all its nakedness *to itself* as the self that *is there* and has taken over the being-there of its Da-sein. For what purpose? *To be that Da-sein*.

[Nicht mir als mir, nicht mir mit diesen bestimmten Absichten usf. Also dem namenlosen und bestimmungslosen Ich? Nein, wohl aber dem Selbst, dessen Name, Stand und dergleichen belanglos geworden, selbst in die Gleichgültigkeit mit hineingezogen ist. Doch das in all dem belanglos werdende Selbst des Daseins verliert damit nicht seine Bestimmtheit, sondern umgekehrt, diese eigentümliche Verarmung, die mit diesem "es ist einem langweilig" bezüglich unserer Person einsetzt, *bringt* das *Selbst* erst in aller Nacktheit *zu ihm selbst* als das Selbst, das *da ist* und sein Da-sein übernommen hat. Wozu? *Es zu sein*.]

²⁰ Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?," 110 / 87; see Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, "Editor's Epilogue," in FCM 372 / 541.

the nothing. But even in this text, Heidegger does not say anything explicitly about the way in which these two basic moods are related to each other.²¹

This cannot be explained away by appeal to some general reluctance on Heidegger's part to explain certain moods in terms of other moods or to make remarks about the relations between such phenomena. For Heidegger does not refrain from

²¹ Jean-Luc Marion nonetheless argues that there is an essential relation between boredom and anxiety as they play out in "What Is Metaphysics?". Boredom, Marion explains, "shows the totality of beings" and thereby "leads" to anxiety, which, in turn, "inclines one toward the Nothing." Thus Heidegger's boredom, according to Marion, "leads from beings to their Nothing through the intermediary of their totalization"; and hence the reason why Heidegger invokes boredom in "What Is Metaphysics?" is because he wants to "make beings as a whole accessible, *before* taking recourse to anxiety in order to reach the Nothing." On the basis of this reading, Marion contends that Heidegger's account fails to accord with "the things themselves" insofar as boredom "receives [in it] only a provisional and transitional role," as it merely serves the "ancillary function of freeing us from a being, in order to put us face to face with beings as a whole." Marion insists that even in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, the significance of boredom remains limited to serving this "ancillary function." He then goes on to announce that "contrary to Heidegger... [a]nother boredom, or a boredom liberated from its ancillary condition, can indeed come to light, a mood even more fundamental than the 'fundamental mood' of anxiety, a boredom of the depths even more disarming than 'profound boredom.'" Marion does not account, however, for the crucial absence of anxiety from *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. This absence is rendered all the more puzzling in light of his reading. For what is boredom's function in that text if it does not lead us there to anxiety? Marion also does not take into account the fact that according to Heidegger not only *both* anxiety and boredom put us face to face with beings as a whole, or with the totality of being, but, in principle, *all* moods can have such an effect (BT 176 / 137, 225-27 / 181-82; FCM 238 / 410), so that in this regard, boredom is apparently not needed at all. Marion finds a more profound instance of boredom, a boredom that is "liberated from its ancillary condition" in Pascal's famous words: "Man's condition. Inconstancy, boredom, restlessness." ["Condition de l'homme. Inconstance, ennui, inquiétude."; Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Philippe Sellier (Paris: Garnier, 1991), no. 58, 169]. Contrasting Pascal's "man" with Heidegger's "Dasein," Marion explains that "contrary to *Dasein*, which ever oscillates only between the two postulations of its mode of being a distinctive being (namely, authenticity and inauthenticity), 'man' directly recognizes it as his 'condition' to keep his distance from everything in the world that will ever be able to determine him as the being that, nevertheless, he alone purely is." However, as we shall see in chapter 3, the movement of oscillation between authenticity and inauthenticity, alongside the concept of anxiety, is precisely what is missing from Heidegger's account of boredom in the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*—so that we are left in that text with only the steady and unidirectional movement in the "direction of becoming more profound" (*Richtung des Tieferwerdens*). This indicates, once again, that the more profound mood that Marion believes to have found in Pascal but not in Heidegger is precisely the one that he could find in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, even though he explicitly denies that. Finally, when Marion goes on to describe that "more profound" boredom as one which "peaceably and serenely abandons beings to themselves, as if nothing were the matter," he gives the impression that what he has in mind is the indifference of stoicism, or what Heidegger calls "equanimity" (*Gleichmut*), rather than the type of agitation that is usually called "boredom." Marion, *Reduction and Givenness*, 175, 188-91. Marion originally pursues this argument in "L'angoisse et l'ennui: Pour interpreter 'Was ist Metaphysik?'," *Archives de Philosophie*, 43, no. 1 (1980), 121-46; and he further develops it in chapter 4 of *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. by Thomas Carlson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991 [1982]), especially pp. 115-19. The latter two texts, it should be noted, were published before Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1983).

following such directions of inquiry. In *Being and Time*, for instance, he tells us that the basic mood of joy—which in “What Is Metaphysics?” he mentions between boredom and anxiety—“comes along” (*geht zusammen*) with the anxiety of being-towards-death.²² He does not pursue an analysis of joy in *Being and Time* because, as he immediately explains, it “would transgress the limits [of the interpretation],” but earlier in the text he explains anxiety in terms of fear, considering it a “kindred phenomenon” (*verwandtes Phänomen*; 227 / 182, 230 / 185). He also systematically explains anxiety in terms of uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*; 233-34 / 188-89). In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, he begins his analysis of boredom by explaining it in terms of the “basic mood” of homesickness (*Heimweh*; 5-7 / 7-10, 80 / 120).²³

Moreover, it is difficult to say to what extent, if at all, a mood can be considered a singular phenomenon. In his analysis of boredom, Heidegger distinguishes between three “forms” (*Formen*) of boredom, implying thereby that they are all manifestations of essentially the same thing (FCM 91-92 / 138). But the way in which he discriminates between the three forms of boredom is similar, at bottom, to the way in which he discriminates between fear and anxiety in *Being and Time*, that is, according to the determinability of the cause. But regarding fear and anxiety, Heidegger makes the opposite claim, that they are different phenomena, even though, as he explains, the

²² BT 358 / 310: “Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility.” [“Mit der nüchternen Angst, die vor das vereinzelte Seinkönnen bringt, geht die gerüstete Freude an dieser Möglichkeit zusammen.”] Cf. WM 93 / 118.

²³ Another comparative consideration of the moods is to be found in *Contributions to Philosophy*, where Heidegger considers the relation between the basic moods of anxiety (*Angst*) and horror (*Entsetzen*; translated there as “setting-free”), as well as between wonder (*Er-stauen*), which is the basic mood of philosophy’s “first beginning,” and horror (*Entsetzen*; translated as “freeing dismay”), the basic mood of philosophy’s “other beginning,” in which Dasein becomes open “for the distress of lack of distress” (*die Not der Notlosigkeit*). See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 340; *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, GA 65 (2014 [1989]), 483-84.

difference between them is usually overlooked and the one word is mostly used when the other phenomenon is in fact meant (230 / 185). This may explain why a few years later, in *Contributions to Philosophy (Beiträge zur Philosophie)*,²⁴ Heidegger states that, “Every naming of the basic mood with a single word rests on a false notion.” [“Jede Nennung der Grundstimmung in einem einzigen Wort legt auf eine Irrmeinung fest.”]²⁵

However, the context in which Heidegger writes these words is his announcement of philosophy’s “other beginning,” whose basic mood “*has* to have many names.”²⁶ Here one indeed sees a certain proliferation of basic Heideggerian moods,²⁷ while in *Being and Time* and other texts from the same time period,²⁸ Heidegger mostly focuses on anxiety,

²⁴ Written between 1936-38 and not originally intended for publication.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Contributions*, 16 / 22; trans. modified; “basic mood” instead of “grounding attunement.”

²⁶ Ibid., emphasis added.

²⁷ In the German text of the *Contributions*, one encounters the basic moods (*Grundstimmungen*) of *Erschrecken* (14-15, 22, 157), *Verhaltenheit* (15-16, 22, 395), *Scheu* (15, 22, 396), *Ahnung* (22), *Erkennen* (22), *Entsetzen* (158), and *Schrecken* (396). Some of these moods, alongside others—though without being qualified as “basic”—are also mentioned in *History of the Concept of Time* (287-88 / 397-98): *Erschrecken* (fright), *Grauen* (horror), *Entsetzen* (terror), *Ängstlichkeit* (anxiousness), *Schüchternheit* (timidity), *Scheu* (shyness), *Bangigkeit* (misgiving), and *Stutzigwerden* (becoming startled); but the latter set of moods consists in moods that are mentioned as “modifications of fear” and considered to be “grounded” in the phenomenon of anxiety.

²⁸ I.e., the 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time* and the 1929 lecture “What Is Metaphysics?” Heidegger repeats some of what he says about anxiety in the latter lecture in his Kant Book, which was also published in 1929, and in which the special status of anxiety as “that fundamental feeling which places us before the nothing” is confirmed [“Die Angst ist diejenige Grundbefindlichkeit, die vor das Nichts stellt”]. See Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), 245-47; *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, GA 3 (1991), 237-38. Heidegger also deals with anxiety and related phenomena prior to 1925, but not in the context of developing his own concept of *Stimmung* or *Befindlichkeit*. According to Kisiel, “The earliest allusion to dread [i.e., *Angst*] occurs in WS 1919/20, by way of Otto’s ‘experience of the Holy.’” The reference here is to the lecture course *Basic Problems of Phenomenology (Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie)*, where Heidegger speaks of the “‘something’ of factual experiencing” (das “‘Etwas’ des faktischen Erfahrens”), or of the “pre-theoretical something,” which “has not the least to do with the formal-logical something of objectivity” (das formallogische “Etwas der Gegenständlichkeit”) and which “carries the highest potential uncanniness and the most complete uncanniness of life” (“die höchste potentielle und volle Unheimlichkeit des Lebens”). This is where Heidegger alludes to Otto’s concept of the numinous, making an analogy with “The ‘something’ in the *mysterium tremendum*” [“das ‘Etwas’ im *mysterium tremendum*”]. See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1919/20), trans. Scott Campbell (London: Bloomsbury), 85; *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 58, 1993, 106-7; cf. also supplement to this lecture according to Oskar Becker’s transcript of the lecture course, appendix b/1, addendum 8, 163 / 217, where the notions of anxiety and fear are explicitly utilized. In the 1921 lecture course on Augustine, “Augustine and Neoplatonism,” Heidegger discusses the notion of *timor castus* (pure fear, distinguished by Augustine from *timor servilis*, servile fear), which according to Kisiel is to be considered the “precursor” of

giving the impression, in spite of his cautious avoidance of superlatives, that this mood has a certain priority in his thinking, even leading some commentators to argue that anxiety is a “presupposition” of his philosophy.²⁹ Likewise, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger almost exclusively focuses on boredom. In spite of the similarities between these two concepts, as well as (from the viewpoint of the development of Heidegger’s thought) their temporal and textual proximities, when Heidegger utilizes the one, he hardly, if at all, mentions the other. I suggest that this is so not despite these similarities and proximities but because of them, or, what amounts to

Heidegger’s own concept of anxiety. Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* (1918-21), trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), §§12, 16; *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, GA 60, 1995, §§12, 16; cf. section titled “Anxiety” in Heidegger’s notes and sketches for this lecture course (which includes a quote from Kierkegaard’s *Concept of Anxiety*: “Anxiety discovers fate”; “Die Angst entdeckt das Schicksal”; CA 159 / *Der Begriff der Angst*, [Jena: Diederich, 1923], 160), in the first appendix, 201-2 / 268-69, as well as in the supplement to §16 from Becker’s notes in appendix II, 222-26 / 293-97. Another early occurrence of anxiety according to Kisiel is to be found in the 1923 Freiburg lecture course *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (*Ontologie: Hermeneutik der Faktizität*; GA 63, 1988: 17, 19, 32). However, as Kisiel points out, Heidegger’s first explicit analysis of anxiety (*Angst*) is to be found in his first lecture course at Marburg, from winter semester 1923/24, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*. See trans. by Daniel Dahlstrom (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005 [1994]); *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (1923/24), GA 17, 1994. Here, in the context of a discussion of Husserl’s *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science* (§14 ff.), Heidegger considers “care about already known knowledge as anxiety in the face of existence [*Dasein*]” (die “Sorge um erkannte Erkenntnis als Angst vor dem Dasein”), and towards the end of this lecture course (§50 ff.), Heidegger elaborates on the various characteristics of care (qualified as care about already known knowledge) in terms of falling, fleeing, and uncanniness; cf. also supplement 30 to this lecture course, where the notion of uncanniness (translated as eeriness) is further explicated (240-43 / 317-21). See Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), appendix d, 490.

²⁹ Otto Bollnow goes as far as to argue that, “the entire construction of [Heidegger’s] philosophy rests on the narrow ground of a single mood, anxiety.” Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1974 [1956]), 68. Heidegger reacts to this common allegation (i.e., of elevating anxiety “to the status of the only fundamental attunement”) in his 1943 “Postscript to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’” See translation by William McNeill in *Pathmarks*, 232ff.; “Nachwort zu: ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’”, in *Wegmarken*, GA 9, 305ff. Marion appears to criticize Heidegger along similar lines when he speaks of the phenomenologically unjustified “superiority” that Heidegger ascribes to anxiety in “What Is Metaphysics?” (*Reduction and Givenness*, 175). But for Marion the problem is not, as Heidegger presents it in the “Postscript” (233 / 305), that a “‘philosophy of anxiety’ paralyzes the will to act,” but that (a) Heidegger’s account of anxiety involves the “phenomenological operation that accomplishes a reduction of being in its entirety, at the end of which there remains, as a threatening obsession, in face of and around *Dasein*, only the Nothingness/Nothing” (*God without Being*, 116-17), and that (b) there is a “mood even more fundamental than the ‘fundamental mood’ of anxiety,” a mood that “does not lack beings, nor suffer the assault of the Nothing,” i.e., boredom (*Reduction and Givenness*, 189, 191).

the same thing, because there are certain differences between these moods that Heidegger fails to make explicit.

A systematic comparison of Heidegger's concepts of anxiety and boredom, as well as of the wider conceptual frameworks in which each of these concepts is embedded, brings some of these differences to light. It can be seen that these concepts differ in at least four crucial respects: ontological, hermeneutic, psychological, and ethical-theological.

The ontological difference between anxiety and boredom is that boredom is essentially a concept of time,³⁰ while anxiety, although it has the “peculiar” (*eigentümlich*) temporality of “having been” (*Gewesenheit*; BT 394-95 / 344), can be conceptualized regardless of temporality—as Heidegger demonstrates, although without making this point explicit, in his elaboration of his concept of anxiety in the first division

³⁰ FCM 98 / 149: “*Becoming bored and boredom in general are then evidently entirely rooted in this enigmatic essence of time.*” [“Das Gelangweiltwerden und die Langeweile überhaupt ist dann offenbar ganz in diesem rätselhaften Wesen der Zeit verpurzelt.”]; cf. also 133 / 201, 171 / 253. As we shall see in chapter 3, at certain points in the analysis of boredom it appears that Heidegger employs the notions of boredom and time interchangeably (e.g., when he speaks of “driving away boredom that drives time on” [“Zeit antreibendes Wegtreiben der Langeweile”; 93 / 140; emphasis omitted], and at one point Heidegger even admits: “We are increasingly tempted to pose the whole problem of boredom simply in terms of the problem of time.” [“Immer mehr sind wir versucht, das ganze Problem der Langeweile einfach auf das Zeitproblem zu stellen.”] (99 / 149). It is also important to stress that I do not intend to suggest that anxiety does not have significant temporal aspects but only that it is not *primarily* a temporal concept. Primarily, one may say, anxiety is a concept of space. Elsewhere, in a study of the European Union (*The Langeweile and the longue durée: Boredom and Politics in Postnational Europe* [Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2010], MA Thesis), I employ the distinction between communities of space and communities of time, in light of the work of Harold Innis and Niklas Luhmann, in order to explain the constitutive role that boredom plays in the discourse of post-national politics. It is arguable that spatially demarcated communities, like the nation-state, have anxiety as their constitutive mood, as indeed the idea that the nation-state is a security community primarily organized to address a collective fear of some danger or other is as old as the nation-state itself. The question is what it would mean to think of boredom as a political alternative. In more pragmatic terms, this question translates into the question whether politics should be interesting. Though these ideal-typical analogies require further elaboration, the concrete example of politics may indicate what could be the implications of such spatiotemporal conceptualizations of moods. Finally, one should also note in this regard that the association between boredom and time applies not only to the German *Langeweile*. Also in English one colloquially “kills time” when one is bored (cf. FCM 93 / 140). Moreover, the observation that boredom is essentially related to time has been frequently made in non-German literature on the topic, from John Cassian, who wrote in Latin on the cardinal sin of acedia in the fifth century (*Institutes*, 217-234), to contemporary psychiatrists, sociologists, and literary theorists.

of *Being and Time*. As we shall see in chapter 3, this explains why boredom is not mentioned at all in this book, while notions that appear similar, such as indifference (both *Gleichgültigkeit* and *Indifferenz*) and the “lack of mood” (*Ungestimmtheit*), play a crucial role in both of its divisions. This difference can also be stated as follows: because the essence of boredom is the suspension of time (*Hingehaltenheit*), the methodological suspension of temporality, which determines the course of the investigation in *Being and Time*, cannot be exercised when it comes to the *analysis* of this phenomenon.

As we shall further see in chapter 3, this difference is expressed in yet another difference, which can be qualified as “hermeneutic.” While anxiety is generative of the dialectics of authenticity, which governs and complicates the analyses of both being in general and anxiety in particular in *Being and Time*, boredom simplifies, and thereby cancels out, this dialectics. Not only does boredom render the methodological suspension of temporality redundant (ontological difference), it also undermines the hermeneutic principle of *Being and Time* (i.e., the dialectics of authenticity). I will show that this may explain why Heidegger ultimately fails to explicate the differences between boredom and anxiety.

The third difference is psychological, and it consists in the fact that anxiety is a fear-related mood, as it is indeed worked out in *Being and Time*, while boredom, in all of its forms and variations, does not involve fear. Heidegger confirms this in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* when he states that boredom is experienced in the *absence* of oppressiveness (*Bedrängnis*), danger (*Gefahr*), mystery (*Geheimnis*), or inner terror (*inneres Schrecken*; 163-64 / 244-5).³¹

³¹ Note, however, that Heidegger refrains from mentioning the concepts of fear or anxiety upon making this point.

From this psychological difference there ensues the fourth, ethical-theological one: the absence of fear in boredom also entails the removal of the fear-related notions of guilt and sin. While all the mentioned differences are intrinsically related, this last difference is the central point of the next chapter. It brings us all the way from the anxiety of Søren Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Anxiety* (*Begrebet Angest*; 1844), which is psychological in that it is inherently ambiguous in relation to guilt, and dogmatic in that it involves the presupposition of original sin; through Heidegger's onto-ethical, or ontotheological, concept of anxiety, in which there is guilt but no sin; to the ontosociological or anthropological concept of boredom, which excludes the senses of both guilt and sinfulness.

On the basis of this difference, I will pursue in the following two chapters the hypothesis that the transition from anxiety to boredom, in and beyond Heidegger's philosophy, designates a process of conceptual transformation that can be understood in terms of secularization and whereby the moral-psychological constructs of guilt, sinfulness, and conscience have undergone a fundamental change so as to necessitate a redefinition and reevaluation of the individual's relation to the experience of emptiness, meaninglessness, or nothingness. On one level, this means that the difference between anxiety and boredom maps onto the distinction between religiosity and secularity. On another level, this tells us something about the nature of secularization, namely that it is a process whose emotional aspect is the emergence of boredom as a form of anxiety that does not involve sinfulness or guilt consciousness.

Chapter 2: The Secularization of Theological Concepts

To read the transition from the anxiety of *Being and Time* to the boredom of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* under the rubric of secularization does not necessarily require much exegetical effort. Even a cursory comparative consideration of the sets of concepts that Heidegger utilizes in each of his accounts of these phenomena is apparently sufficient to justify such a reading. In *Being and Time*, as we have seen, where the concept of anxiety plays a crucial role, the word *Langeweile* does not occur at all, while in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, which contains some 150 pages of detailed analysis of the phenomenon of boredom, there is no reference to the concept of anxiety. The crucial piece of evidence in this regard is that, alongside anxiety, one finds at the heart of *Being and Time* and in different variations and forms the moral-theological notions of falling (*Verfallen*), conscience (*Gewissen*), and guilt (*Schuld*). Heidegger *disregards* the specific moral-theological significance of these notions, using them in a merely “formal indicatory” manner, and on several occasions in the text, he even explicitly denies it.¹ But the denial only confirms that at least on their face these notions do indeed have such a significance.² This denial may even create the impression that Heidegger grapples here with a certain vocabulary or conceptual limitation that compels him to betray his indebtedness to the religious tradition. That this is not inevitable, as some have argued,³ is shown in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* in that these

¹ Heidegger performs this denial with respect to each of the mentioned three theologically charged notions: falling (224 / 179-80), conscience (313 / 269), and guilt (496 n. ii / 306 n. 1). Compare with Heidegger’s more vehement denial in *History of the Concept of Time* (283 / 391), as well as with his more general remark about secularization as the “ultimate error” (“letzte Verirrung”) of the “humanistic” interpretation of his work in his “Letter on ‘Humanism,’” 249 / 327.

² See de Vries, *Philosophy*, 198-99.

³ E.g., Stephen Mulhall explains that “Heidegger famously and extensively resorts to quasi-theological terminology (falling, guilt, conscience, and so on) whilst denying that what he means to say with it either is

notions, as well as any other notion that clearly belongs to the discourse of theology or moral psychology, are either altogether absent from this text or rendered implicit in it.⁴

(a) Secularization and Appropriation

There are many ways in which Heidegger's philosophy can be considered in terms of secularization, each of which may lead one in various directions depending on one's motivation, the specific text under consideration, and the specific period of Heidegger's philosophizing—be it that of the “young,” “early,” “mature,” or “late” Heidegger, before, during, or after the “turn.” Here, I use the word “secularization” primarily to describe Heidegger's general concern with the differentiation of philosophy from theology and especially in the sense in which he is often said to appropriate for himself ideas and themes that appear to originate in the writings of Kierkegaard—that is, the sense in which he is said to *secularize* the teachings of Kierkegaard, whether this secularization is carried out in spite of Kierkegaard's religious commitments or as a continuation of a secularizing impetus that already exists in Kierkegaard's thought or in Protestantism in general.⁵

Put differently, “secularization” designates the logic whereby Heidegger maintains a distance in his philosophizing from both theology and the teachings of Kierkegaard. It is the logic behind his famous proclamation in 1943 that “Kierkegaard is not a thinker but a religious writer” [“Kierkegaard ist kein Denker, sondern ein religiöser

or presupposes any theological claim,” and then states, “This is not an obvious contradiction, or a piece of self-serving disingenuousness; it is an unavoidable structure of his thinking.” See Stephen Mulhall, *Philosophical Myths of the Fall* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 48-9.

⁴ This not to suggest that *all* theological references are eliminated in this text for not only would key concepts in it, such as the *Augenblick* and *Offenbarkeit*, then serve as counterexamples, but also this is arguably impossible in principle.

⁵ The latter view, according to Baring, is shared by commentators as different as Löwith, Przywara, and Wahl, while the former is ascribable to Brunner and Kuhlmann among others. See Baring, “A Secular Kierkegaard,” 81, 83, 85, 87, 92 n. 83. See introduction, footnote 20.

Schriftsteller”];⁶ his statement in *Being and Time* that “there is more to be learned philosophically from [Kierkegaard’s] ‘edifying’ writings than from his theoretical ones” [“von seinen ‘erbaulichen’ Schriften [ist] philosophisch mehr zu lernen als von den theoretischen”] (494 n. vi / 235 n. 1); as well as what he writes in a letter to Karl Löwith in 1921: “I also don’t have Kierkegaard’s *tendency*.” [“Ich habe auch nicht die *Tendenz* Kierkegaards.”]⁷ These assertions notwithstanding, as one may suspect, the difference between a thinker and a religious writer remains elusive in Heidegger’s own work, while it remains clear that theology is a vital force in his philosophizing, that he has been profoundly influenced by Kierkegaard, and that this, as has often been noted, applies in particular to *The Concept of Anxiety*—which is the only “exception” (*Ausnahme*) that Heidegger mentions to his remark that Kierkegaard’s upbuilding discourses are philosophically more significant than the works of his pseudonymous authorship (BT 492 n. iv / 190 n. 1).⁸

⁶ Heidegger, “Nietzsche’s Word,” 186 / 249.

⁷ Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007 [1986]), 32; emphasis added.

⁸ According to Moyn, Heidegger “was the first to give anxiety particular philosophical attention” and “when he did so, it was precisely in the direction of separation and secularization of Kierkegaard’s long-marginal theme.” In the 1930s, this theme was picked up by Wahl, “the first French Kierkegaardian to be influenced by Heidegger’s intermediation,” leading to Wahl’s own “constructive project” of the “secularization of anxiety.” See Moyn, “Anxiety and Secularization,” 284, 290. It is also important to remember in this regard that Heidegger’s appropriation of Kierkegaard’s concept of anxiety did also not take place without any intermediation. Perhaps most directly, he was influenced to this effect by Karl Jaspers, whose philosophy is described by Wahl as a “sort of secularization and generalization of the philosophy of Kierkegaard.” See Jean Wahl, *A Short History of Existentialism*, trans. Forrest Williams and Stanley Maron (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 9. Heidegger himself acknowledges Jaspers on several occasions in *Being and Time*, singling out the latter’s (a) 1919 *Psychology of World Views* (*Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*), (b) interpretation of the Kierkegaardian *Augenblick*, and (c) notion of limit-situation (*Grenzsituation*). See BT 494-95 n. vi / 249 n. 1, 496 n. xv / 301 n. 1, 497 n. iii / 338 n. 1. It is clear that at least to a certain extent Heidegger builds on Jaspers’ development (i.e., “secularization and generalization”) of Kierkegaardian ideas when he develops his own concept of anxiety in *Being and Time*. As Peter Gordon shows, this applies in particular to Jaspers’ analysis of limit-situation. As Gordon writes, “both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche helped Jaspers to theorize the limit-situation as what we might call a principle of metaphysical individuation, a tool for breaking free from the otherwise stultifying effects of modernity.” Peter E. Gordon, “German Existentialism and the Persistence of Metaphysics,” in *Situating Existentialism*, 71, 78. McCarthy, too, focuses on the concept of anxiety in his study of Heidegger’s

To this 1844 book Heidegger also refers in another rare moment of acknowledgment, upon introducing his own concept of anxiety in the first division of *Being and Time*, where he states, again in a footnote, that, “It is no accident that the phenomena of anxiety and fear... have come within the purview of Christian theology ontically and even (though within very narrow limits) ontologically.” [“Es ist kein Zufall, daß die Phänomene von Angst und Furcht... ontisch und auch, obzwar in sehr engen Grenzen, ontologisch in den Gesichtskreis der christlichen Theologie kamen.”] (492 / 190). Having made this statement—yet without really explaining why this is “no accident,” that is, why it is rather to be expected that fear and anxiety be subject for Christian theological deliberations⁹—and after referring to the writings of Augustine and Luther on this theme, Heidegger concludes the footnote with a reference to Kierkegaard: “The man who has gone farthest in analyzing the phenomenon of anxiety—and again in the theological context of a ‘psychological’ exposition of the problem of original sin—is Søren Kierkegaard.” [“Am weitesten ist S. Kierkegaard vorgedrungen in der Analyse des Angstphänomens.”]¹⁰

This, however, implies that Kierkegaard has in fact dealt with the problem of anxiety ontologically (rather than merely “ontically”), if only “within very narrow limits”; and so this statement apparently does not sit comfortably with what Heidegger

appropriation of Kierkegaard, in “Martin Heidegger,” 106-10. A reading of *Being and Time* along these lines by Hubert Dreyfus and Jane Rubin is discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

⁹ Heidegger, however, does address this issue explicitly in *History of the Concept of Time* (285 / 393-94), where he also refers to A. W. Hunzinger’s *Das Furchtproblem in der katholischen Lehre von Augustin bis Luther* (1906): “Theologically, the problem of fear is of special significance in connection with the theory of repentance, penance, love toward God, love of God, which itself substantiates fear.” [“Theologisch ist das Problem der Furcht von besonderer Bedeutung im Zusammenhang mit der Theorie von der Reue, der Buße, der Liebe zu Gott, der Liebe Gottes, die selbst die Furcht begründet.”] Another place where Heidegger discusses the relation between love and fear is his 1921 lecture course on Augustine. See Heidegger, *Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 174 / 232-34, supplement to §16 in pp. 222-26 / 293-97.

¹⁰ BT 492 n. iv / 190 n. 1. For an earlier and more detailed formulation of what Heidegger says in this footnote about Kierkegaard after referring to Augustine and Luther, see HCT 292 / 404.

says in a footnote in the opening section of the second division of *Being and Time*, just prior to his dismissive remark regarding the philosophical significance of Kierkegaard's theoretical writings, namely that although "Kierkegaard explicitly seized upon the problem of existence as an existentiell problem, and thought it through in a penetrating fashion... the existential problematic was... alien to him" ["Die existenziale Problematik ist ihm... fremd"]; or with what he says in the third (and last) place where he mentions Kierkegaard in *Being and Time*, namely that Kierkegaard was not thoroughly "successful in interpreting [the phenomenon of the moment of vision] existentially." ["S. Kierkegaard hat das *existenzielle* Phänomen des Augenblicks wohl am eindringlichsten gesehen, was nicht schon bedeutet, daß ihm auch die existenziale Interpretation entsprechend gelungen ist."]¹¹ It would be ludicrous to infer from this that only in Kierkegaard's treatment of the concept of anxiety can one find true ontological insights, and that otherwise, "the existential problematic was... alien to him," as if existence, the moment of vision, and the concept of anxiety were not related intrinsically and on the most fundamental level.

Heidegger appears to contradict himself once again in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*—a text that could easily qualify as an "upbuilding" or "moralizing" discourse in its own right, or perhaps even as a sermon, especially in view of the language of "awakening" (*Weckung*) that is utilized in it¹²—where Kierkegaard is praised

¹¹ 494 n. vi / 235 n. 1; 497 n. 3 / 338 n. 1; cf. also Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. Fred Wieck and Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 213; *Was heisst Denken?* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1954), 127: "But about the decisive question—the essential nature of being—Kierkegaard has nothing whatever to say." ["Dagegen hat Kierkegaard zu der entscheidenden Frage nach dem Wesen des Seins nicht das geringste Verhältnis."]

¹² Cf. FCM 131 / 198: "it is not a matter of taking a definition of boredom home with you, but of learning and understanding how to move in the depths of Dasein." ["Es handelt sich nicht darum, daß Sie eine Definition der Langeweile nach Hause tragen, sondern daß Sie verstehen lernen sich in der Tiefe des Daseins zu bewegen."]

for being the first to comprehend the concept of the *Augenblick* philosophically, “a comprehending with which the *possibility* of a completely new epoch of philosophy has begun for the first time since antiquity.” [“ein Begreifen, mit dem seit der Antike die *Möglichkeit* einer vollkommen neuen Epoche der Philosophie beginnt.”] (150 / 225). Kierkegaard is praised here for grasping that which, according to the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, he failed to understand, namely, primordial temporality and the comprehension that time is not merely a sequence of now-moments.¹³ The important thing to see here, however, is not only that Heidegger wavers in his appreciation of Kierkegaard between dismissal and praise, but also that the moments of acknowledgment appear disproportionately rare in view of the obvious profundity of the influence that Kierkegaard has actually exerted on him. This “minimization of Kierkegaard” in Heidegger’s writings has been widely documented, and it appears to betray a certain reluctance, resistance, or even compulsion on Heidegger’s part.¹⁴ Heidegger does not merely heavily *draw* on Kierkegaard; he *repeats*¹⁵ major strands of Kierkegaard’s philosophy—among other things, the concept of repetition itself¹⁶—and he does that by way of secularization.

¹³ BT 497 n. 3 / 338 n. 1: “[Kierkegaard] clings to the ordinary conception of time, and defines the ‘moment of vision’ with the help of ‘now’ and ‘eternity’ [i.e., the *Augenblick* as an “atom of eternity”]. When Kierkegaard speaks of ‘temporality,’ what he has in mind is man’s ‘being-in-time.’ Time as within-time-ness knows only the now it never knows a moment of vision.” [“Er bleibt am vulgären Zeitbegriff haften und bestimmt den Augenblick mit Hilfe von Jetzt und Ewigkeit. Wenn K. von ‘Zeitlichkeit’ spricht, meint er das ‘In-der-Zeit-sein’ des Menschen. Die Zeit als Innerzeitigkeit kennt nur das Jetzt, aber nie einen Augenblick.”]; Cf. Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 288; *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24 (1975), 408-9.

¹⁴ The expression “minimization of Kierkegaard” is from McCarthy, “Martin Heidegger,” 96.

¹⁵ As Harold Bloom writes in *Anxiety of Influence* (80), “Conceptually the central problem for the latecomer necessarily is *repetition*, for repetition dialectically raised to re-creation is the ephebe’s road of excess, leading away from the horror of finding himself to be only a company or a replica.”

¹⁶ As John Caputo writes, “the Kierkegaardian origin of what Heidegger calls ‘*Wiederholung*’ (retrieval, repetition) cannot be denied.” Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutics Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 12.

But however compulsive this repetition appears to be, Heidegger *selects* what to repeat, although he does not officially attribute significance to the specificity of that which he selects to repeat, that is, to the “ontic” content due to which the selected concept or phenomenon is primarily associated with a certain field of inquiry or domain of human conduct or experience. He repeats the question about the meaning of being, and he repeats the teachings of Kierkegaard, believing in each case that the very originality of his work consists in such repetitions, that originality *as such* is a matter of repetition,¹⁷ but certain concepts and themes do not “survive” the repetition, that is, fail to remain explicit in it. Since the specificity (onticity) of the concepts and themes that *do* survive the repetition is methodically disregarded by Heidegger, the reason for the exclusion of those other themes and concepts is largely left unaccounted for.

(b) From Sin to Guilt

One of the concepts that are left out from *Being and Time* is the concept of sin (*Sünde*). When it is mentioned explicitly, its significance is denied; otherwise, it only appears in terminological disguise as the concept of “falling” (*Verfallen*) or “fallenness” (*Verfallenheit*). But this disguise only accentuates the specific theological features that it is apparently supposed to cover, those of the Christian doctrine of the fall.¹⁸ This gives an

¹⁷ FCM 260 / 378: “Originality consists in nothing other than decisively seeing and thinking once again at the right moment of vision that which is essential, that which has already been repeatedly seen and thought before.” [“Originalität besteht in nichts anderem als darin, das Wesentliche, das immer schon und wiederholt gesehen und gedacht wurde, im rechten Augenblick entscheidend wieder zu sehen und wieder zu denken.”]. Cf. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 41 / 42.

¹⁸ To what extent this doctrine can also be considered Jewish in the Heideggerian context is a question that will have to be postponed here. Following Paul Ricoeur, Marlène Zarader discusses the question of Heidegger and Judaism in *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); originally published as *La dette impensée* (Paris: Seuil, 1990). Cf. de Vries, *Philosophy*, 107-8 n. 8. However productive, this line of interpretation remains limited to the consideration of that which is *unconscious* in Heidegger’s thought, as Zarader herself suggests (*Unthought Debt*, 71), while Heidegger’s engagement with Christian sources and denial of their philosophical

opportunity for Heidegger to insist that he uses the term “falling” merely as an “ontological concept of movement” (*ontologischer Bewegungsbegriff*) and that it says nothing about man’s falling from grace or “the ‘corruption of human nature’” (*die Verderbnis der menschlichen Natur*) because it is “prior” to such determinations (BT 223-24 / 179-80; trans. modified; cf. HCT 283 / 391).

The second opportunity for Heidegger to deny the significance of sin comes in the second division of *Being and Time*, where he denies the significance of not only the actuality of sin but also its possibility. In “being-towards-death” (*Sein zum Tode*)—that is, in Dasein’s being towards its “ownmost” (*eigenste*), “non-relational” (*unbezügliche*), and “uttermost” (*äußerste*) possibility of its utter impossibility (*schlechthinnige Unmöglichkeit*; 294 / 250)—Dasein understands itself as the “basis of a nullity” (*Grund einer Nichtigkeit*), an understanding which involves anxiety and a sense of “being guilty” (*Schuldigsein*; 352-55 / 305-8). The proper confrontation with this state of being and mind coincides with the “moment” (*Augenblick*), which is the unity of the three ecstases of time, and “anticipatory resoluteness” (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*; 355-58 / 308-10),

significance is explicit, especially in his writings from the 1920s. Moreover, what Heidegger says in “Phenomenology and Theology” (42 / 49) probably also applies to his entire oeuvre:

Note that we are considering theology here in the sense of Christian theology. This is not to say that Christian theology is the only theology. The most central question is whether, indeed, theology in general is a science. This question is deferred here, not because we wish to evade the problem, but only because that question cannot be asked meaningfully until the idea of theology has been clarified to a certain extent.

[Ich bemerke dabei, daß ich Theologie im Sinne der christlichen Theologie auffasse, wobei nicht gesagt ist, daß es nur diese gäbe. Die Frage, ob Theologie überhaupt eine Wissenschaft sei, ist zwar die zentralste Frage; sie soll aber hier zurückgestellt werden; nicht etwa deshalb, weil wir diesem Problem ausweichen wollten, sondern allein deshalb, weil mit Sinn diese Frage, ob Theologie eine Wissenschaft sei, gar nicht gestellt werden kann, wenn nicht zuvor ihre Idee in einem gewissen Umfange geklärt ist.]

which is the existential synthesis of freedom and necessity.¹⁹ But Heidegger insists that the sense of guilt to which he refers here does not involve or assume sinfulness: “The existential analysis of being-guilty proves nothing either *for* or *against* the possibility of sin.” [“Die existenziale Analyse des Schuldigseins beweist weder etwas *für* noch *gegen* die Möglichkeit der Sünde.”] (496 n. ii / 306 n. 1).

Heidegger appears to repeat this claim in his 1927 lecture “Phenomenology and Theology” (“Phänomenologie und Theologie”; published in 1969), where after stating that “the ontological concept of guilt as such is never a theme of theology” (which supposedly exemplifies what is “formally indicative” about the “corrective function” of ontology), he says: “Also the concept of sin is not simply built up upon the ontological concept of guilt.” [“Der Begriff der Sünde wird auch nicht einfach auf den ontologischen Begriff der Schuld aufgebaut.”] (52 / 65). However, this formulation is somewhat softer than the one that we find in *Being and Time*, which implies that not even the possibility of sin is indicated by the concept of guilt. Another difference is that in “Phenomenology and Theology” Heidegger asserts that “*All* theological concepts necessarily contain that understanding of being that is constitutive of human Dasein as such, insofar as it exists at all.” [“*Alle* theologischen Begriffe bergen notwendig *das* Seinsverständnis in sich, das das menschliche Dasein als solches von sich hat, sofern es überhaupt existiert.”] (51 / 63; emphasis on “all” added). Following this statement, he immediately uses sin as an example, referring to it as a “phenomenon of existence” (51 / 64, and, once again, in

¹⁹ BT 443 / 391: “As fate, resoluteness is freedom to *give up* some definite resolution, and to give it up in accordance with the demands of some possible situation or other.” [“Die Entschlossenheit als Schicksal ist die Freiheit für das möglicherweise situationsmäßig geforderte *Aufgeben* eines bestimmten Entschlusses.”] Cf. FCM 149 / 223: “The self-liberation of Dasein, however, only happens in each case if Dasein *resolutely discloses* itself to itself, i.e., discloses itself for itself as Da-sein.” [“Das Sichbefreien des Daseins geschieht aber je nur, wenn es sich *zu sich selbst entschließt*, d.h. für sich als das Da-sein sich erschließt.”]

italics, on page 52 / 65)—just as Kierkegaard does in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (*Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*; 1846).²⁰ But if this is what Heidegger really thinks, why then is there no explicit discussion of the concept of sin in *Being and Time*?

Heidegger's assertion that "all theological concepts necessarily contain that understanding of being that is constitutive of human Dasein as such, insofar as it exists at all," comes relatively late in the text of the lecture. It qualifies the main thesis that he famously puts forth early in the text, namely that "theology is a positive science, and as such . . . is absolutely different from philosophy." ["Die Theologie ist eine positive Wissenschaft und als solche... von der Philosophie absolut verschieden."] (41 / 49; emphasis omitted).²¹ This absolute difference notwithstanding, Heidegger tells us towards the end of the lecture, philosophy serves a *function* (*Funktion*) in relation to theology, a function of "correction" (*Korrektion*) or "co-direction" (*Mitleitung*). The operation of this function is carried out in relation to the *content* (*Gehalt*) of theological concepts—but only in relation to that content which determines them ontologically. This ontologically determining content, Heidegger says, can be "grasped purely rationally"

²⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans., Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 491; *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, SKS 7: 532. The expression Kierkegaard uses here is "*Existents-Bestemmelse*" and it is translated by Hannay as "existence category" but it can also be rendered as "existence determination." Cf. also CA 92, where Kierkegaard writes that, "The moment sin is posited, temporality is sinfulness."

²¹ Heidegger already makes a suggestion to a similar effect, though more implicitly, when he lumps theology and the other positive sciences together in *Being and Time*, 30 / 10. Following his return to Freiburg, however, Heidegger retracted this claim. Pöggeler quotes from a 1928 letter in which Heidegger tells Bultmann, "Meine Fragestellung im Vortrag ist bezüglich der Theologie als Wissenschaft nicht nur zu eng, sondern unhaltbar. Die Positivität der Theologie, die ich zwar glaube getroffen zu haben, ist etwas anderes als die der Wissenschaften. Theologie steht in einer ganz anderen Weise als die Philosophie außerhalb der Wissenschaften." This is at least partly why the text of the lecture was only published in 1969—though, as Pöggeler points out, as early as 1930s, it had been widely circulated. However, as the passages that I analyze here suggest, already in the lecture itself Heidegger substantially qualifies his claim. See Otto Pöggeler, *Philosophie und hermeneutische Theologie: Heidegger, Bultmann und die Folgen* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2009), 107-8.

(“rein rational”; 51 / 63)—that is, regardless (and yet “precisely because”) of the content by which those concepts are determined ontically, the content that is historically constructed in a process of ontic sublation (*ontische Aufhebung*) and remains accessible through faith alone. Since Heidegger is primarily concerned here with Christian theology (cf. 42 / 49), he describes this ontologically determining, and purely rationally graspable, content as “pre-Christian” (*vorchristlich*). It is in this sense that he speaks here of “pre-Christian content of basic theological concepts” (*vorchristlicher Gehalt der theologischen Grundbegriffe*; 52 / 64).

Having asserted that “all theological concepts” can be construed existentially, Heidegger primarily mentions sin as an example (*Sünde*). Although sin belongs to the realm of faith,²² it is also a “phenomenon of existence,” which is why it can be regarded as a “concept” in the first place. But rather than pausing on the subject of sin, Heidegger states that “the *content* of the concept [of sin] itself, and not just any philosophical preference of the theologian, calls for a return to the concept of guilt.” [“der Gehalt des Begriffes *selbst*, nicht irgendeine philosophische Liebhaberei der Theologen, <erfordert> den Rückgang auf den Begriff der schuld.”]. Following this statement, he asserts with a rhetorical “but” that suggests that something has been proven: “But guilt is an original ontological determination of the existence of *Dasein*.” [“Schuld aber ist eine ursprüngliche Existenzbestimmung des *Daseins*.”] He then refers to his own treatment of the phenomenon of guilt in the second division of *Being and Time* (§58), states that the concept of guilt “can function as a guide for the theological explication of sin” [“vermag . . . als Leitfaden für die theologische Explikation der Sünde zu fungieren”], and explains

²² PT 51 / 64: “sin is manifest only in faith, and only the believer can factically exist as a sinner.” [“die Sünde <ist> nur im Glauben offenbar, und nur der Gläubige vermag faktisch als Sünder zu existieren.”]

his method of “formal indications” (*formale Anzeige*), highlighting the relative autonomy that theology has over its concepts in spite of the “guiding function” of ontology (unlike the concepts of physics, for example, which acquire their “higher truth” directly and exclusively from the ontology of nature).

But Heidegger does not quite explain in these passages (49-52 / 63-65) why *in the first place* the “content” of the concept of sin “calls for a return [*Rückgang*] to the concept of guilt.” If sin is a phenomenon of existence, why must the philosophical focus shift directly from it to the phenomenon of guilt? In what sense does this shift constitute a return? A return to what?

The impression that the text gives is that the return that Heidegger has here in mind is the one that is supposed to lead us to the “pre-Christian content” of the concept of sin.²³ At first sight it does appear reasonable to assume that the concept of guilt is somehow more existential or less theological than the concept of sin, putting aside the question as to what such a “more” or “less” means, precisely. However, it is also clear that guilt is not an entirely un-Christian concept or a concept that is altogether devoid of theological content. Heidegger never says that guilt is the pre-Christian conceptual content of the phenomenon of sin, as one could have perhaps expected, but only that the “content” of the concept of sin “*itself*... calls for a return to the concept of guilt.” As

²³ It would have been interesting had the return led us to the concept of shame rather than guilt given that the difference between these two anxiety-based emotions is often considered as that which distinguishes Christian and modern cultures from ancient ones—though shame is of course also a central theological notion, playing a central role in the Biblical story of the fall. For an account pursuing this idea, see Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008 [1993]). For a helpful critical appraisal of the utilization of the distinction between cultures of guilt and shame in the ancient Greek context, see David Konstan, “Shame in Ancient Greece,” *Social Research*, vol. 70, no. 4 (2003), 1031-1060. In *The Concept of Anxiety* (97), Kierkegaard explains: “The concepts of guilt and sin in their deepest sense do not emerge in paganism. If they had emerged, paganism would have perished upon the contradiction that one became guilty by fate.” But Kierkegaard does not discuss shame in this context or consider the validity of a pagan notion of anxiety.

Heidegger asserts twice in these passages, it is sin itself which is a phenomenon of existence. One is forced to ask: is there anything according to Heidegger in the content of the concept of sin that is not adequately designated by the concept of guilt and that can nonetheless count as an “ontologically determining” content? In other words, is sin, conceived ontologically, a sheer sign that merely points in the direction where the concept of guilt lies? Is this what makes it a “phenomenon of existence”? And if so, what is the relation between this ontological content and the content that is designated by falling as an “ontological concept of movement”? Why then is the phenomenon of guilt not mentioned in that context at all—that is, in the context of the preparatory analysis of Dasein’s fallen everydayness, carried out in the first division of *Being and Time*? On the other hand, if sin is considered a phenomenon of existence in virtue of something more than just the fact that it “calls for a return to the concept of guilt,” then why is there no analysis of this phenomenon in the context of the “existential analysis of being guilty,” pursued in the second division of *Being and Time*? Heidegger’s statement that the latter analysis “proves nothing either *for* or *against* the possibility of sin” appears to imply that there is nothing in the concept of guilt that calls for a return to the concept of sin, that the movement of the ontological interpretation leads us in only one direction: sin calls for a return to guilt, and the ontological concept of guilt can function as a guide in the theological deliberation on sin, but guilt does not call for sin, and sin cannot be derived from the ontological concept of guilt. What is the reason for the unidirectionality of this mode of interpretation?

(c) From Guilt to Anxiety

A direct answer to all these questions is to be found in Heidegger's relation to Kierkegaard, especially as this relation is expressed in the disciplinary and programmatic differences between *Being and Time* and *The Concept of Anxiety*. While Heidegger is primarily concerned with the assertion of philosophy's autonomy in relation to, and supremacy over, the other, "merely regional" (ontic) sciences, the twentieth-century products of nineteenth century positivism, Kierkegaard writes from what can be described as a meta-disciplinary perspective mentioning sciences such as logic, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, dogmatics, and psychology. Thus, the introduction of *The Concept of Anxiety* begins with a defense of the "view that every scientific issue within the larger compass of science has its definite place [*bestemte Plads*], its measure and its limit, and thereby precisely its harmonious blending in the whole as well as its legitimate participation in what is expressed by the whole." This view, Kierkegaard further explains,

serves the interest of every... specialized deliberation, for when the deliberation forgets where it properly belongs, as language often expresses with striking ambiguity, it forgets itself and becomes something else, and thereby acquires the dubious perfectibility of being able to become anything and everything. (9 / 317)

Kierkegaard criticizes Hegel for transgressing such disciplinary boundaries by means of an "indefatigable negative" that has enabled him to paradoxically introduce movement into the inherently static science of logic—as indicated by the title of the last section of the *Logic*, "Actuality"—and, on the other hand, unjustifiably enter the domain of ethics by simply regarding that same negative as evil (9-14). Only following these general remarks about Hegel and the arrangement of the sciences does one encounter the first programmatic statement in this book:

The present work has set as its task the psychological treatment of the concept of “anxiety,” but in such a way that it constantly keeps *in mente* [in mind] and before its eye the dogma of hereditary sin. Accordingly, it must also, although tacitly so, deal with the concept of sin. (14)

In his treatment of anxiety and guilt in *Being and Time*, by contrast, Heidegger intentionally disregards not only the dogma but also the very concept of sin—not only its reality and actuality but also its ideality and possibility. He insists that his deliberation is ontological and that, as such, it is *prior* to not only theological but also psychological determinations. In this way, Heidegger ignores precisely the two senses in which Kierkegaard speaks of the subject of his book as these are specified in its introduction’s subtitle: “The sense in which the subject of our deliberation is a task of psychological interest [*Interesse*] and the sense in which, after having been the task and interest of psychology, it points directly to dogmatics.” But what is the subject of this book? The title announces: “The Concept of Anxiety,” while the subtitle reads: “A Simple [*simplel*] Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin.” The subject appears to be dual: the concept of anxiety *and* the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin. Yet Kierkegaard declares that this is a *simple* deliberation. This already points to the main argument of this book, namely, that the very conceptualization of anxiety *is* ultimately a deliberation on the dogma of sin.²⁴

What makes anxiety a concept for both Kierkegaard and Heidegger (as well as Freud) is its irreducibility to fear, that is, the absence of palpable danger. Anxiety is caused by the nothing (*Intet*; CA 41 / 347, 61-62 / 366), it individualizes (at birth; 72), and it discloses in the moment (*Øieblikket*; 81 / 384) the possibility of freedom, of the understanding of oneself in terms of one’s own possibilities. According to Kierkegaard,

²⁴ In Part 2, I show that this argument adequately describes the actual evolution of Freud’s theory of anxiety.

“anxiety is freedom’s actuality as the possibility of possibility” (42; see also 66, 77). But unlike Heidegger, Kierkegaard conceptualizes anxiety as that which explains original sin, as the *presupposition* (*Forudsætning*) of it. Thinking anxiety through, according to Kierkegaard, one is necessarily led to the issue of original sin; the concept of anxiety is that “intermediate term” (*Mellembestemmelse*) mediating between innocence and sinfulness, between necessity and freedom (49 / 354). This concept demands psychological treatment according to Kierkegaard because it is inherently ambiguous. That in relation to which this ambiguity is expressed is the question of guilt, for one is simultaneously guilty and not guilty for being in anxiety. Anxiety is a “foreign power,” but one lovingly “sank in anxiety” and for this one is blameworthy. “There is nothing in the world more ambiguous;” says Kierkegaard, “therefore this is the only psychological explanation” (43)—that is, this is the *only* explanation of *how* “sin comes into the world” (20-22).

Kierkegaard defines the science of psychology and the concept of anxiety by way of showing that there is no scientific region in which sin can be properly dealt with (CA 14-15, 14 n. / 321-23, 322 n.). “Sin has its specific place, or more correctly, it has no place, and this is its specific nature.” Finding the proper scientific region for the question of sin is a matter of attunement, that is, of mood; for “science, just as much as poetry and art, presupposes [*forudsætter*] a mood [*Stemning*] in the creator as well as in the observer.” The mood that corresponds to the concept of sin, we are told, is earnestness (*Alvoren*), and for this reason sin cannot be properly dealt with within aesthetics, metaphysics, and psychology. Upon entering each of these scientific regions, the mood is falsified (*forfalsket*). In aesthetics, it turns either “light-minded” or “melancholy,” so that sin is

conceived either comically or tragically, in each case as something “nonsensical that is annulled” rather than, as it should properly be conceived of, which is as something that “is to be overcome.” In metaphysics, “the mood becomes that of dialectical uniformity and disinterestedness.” In psychology, the mood is one of “persistent observation” and “discovering anxiety.” In each case, falsification of the mood entails a falsification of the concept; but the concept itself can also be falsified directly, “for instance, whenever sin is spoken of as a disease, an abnormality, a poison, or a disharmony.” In fact, Kierkegaard says, “Sin does not properly belong in any science, but it is the subject of the sermon, in which the single individual speaks as the single individual to the single individual.” Even in ethics sin does not belong—although in this science, the mood of earnestness is not necessarily falsified—for ethics “remains in ideality” and sin can only be understood according to its actuality (14-15, 14 n.).

“In the struggle to actualize the task of ethics,” says Kierkegaard, “sin shows itself not as something that belongs only accidentally to the accidental individual, but as something that withdraws deeper and deeper as a deeper and deeper presupposition, as a presupposition that goes beyond the individual” (19). Sin itself, however, can only be explained by being presupposed, that is, as a dogma and, therefore, by the science of dogmatics, which alone is justified in explaining things by presupposing them, but which is somehow a science that does that in all earnestness.

And yet in dogmatics, too, sin is not fully explained. For while dogmatics explains that which appears most difficult to comprehend—the *fact* that “sin came into the world” (31), which is the “qualitative leap” that leads one from innocence to sinfulness (48)—dogmatics cannot explain *how* sin came into the world, that is, the *mechanism whereby*

one *becomes* sinful.²⁵ This explanation is provided exclusively by psychology.

Conducting its observations in the mood of “discovering anxiety,” psychology itself is in anxiety, and “in its anxiety psychology portrays sin, while again and again it is in anxiety over the portrayal that it itself brings forth” (15). In other words, psychology is obsessed with the question of sin. Like ethics, it has no access to the actuality of sin; unlike ethics, “the possibility of sin still belongs to it.” Unlike ethics, which “never allows itself to be fooled and does not waste time on such deliberations,” psychology “loves” precisely these; as psychology “becomes deeply absorbed in the possibility of sin, it is unwittingly in the service of another science that only waits for it to finish so that it can begin assist psychology to the explanation.” This other science is dogmatics: “While psychology thoroughly explores the real possibility of sin, dogmatics explains hereditary sin, that is, the ideal possibility of sin” (23).

Thus, the deliberation on anxiety is of psychological interest, according to Kierkegaard, not because (or not *just* because) anxiety is a psychological topic, but because (or *also* because) the very mood of psychological deliberation is “that of discovering anxiety.” The psychological deliberation itself, however, is consumed by the interest that motivates it, until it exhausts itself, and then it “points directly” to dogmatics, to the science in which the concept of sin can be dealt with without a distortion of its corresponding mood. The “directness” of this pointing, however, is gained by the mediating function that the concept of anxiety fulfills as an intermediate term, or rather *determination* (*Mellembestemmelse*; CA 49 / 354), situated between innocence and

²⁵ CA 21-22 / 329: “That which can be the concern of psychology and with which it can occupy itself is not that sin comes into existence [*bliver til*], but how it can come into existence. Psychology can bring its concern to the point where it seems as if sin were there, but the next thing, that sin is there, is qualitatively different from the first.”

sinfulness, a space where one is both guilty and not guilty at the same time. In this space, psychology obsessively observes and depicts the possibility of sin, in a mood that Kierkegaard describes as “antipathetic curiosity” (15). It “becomes deeply absorbed in the possibility of sin,” and it “thoroughly explores the real possibility of sin” (23), quite like Freud’s psychoanalysis, but quite unlike Heidegger’s existential analysis of being-guilty, which “proves nothing either *for* or *against* the possibility of sin.”

When after praising Kierkegaard as “the man who has gone farthest in analysing the phenomenon of anxiety,” Heidegger adds “and again in the theological context of a ‘psychological’ exposition of the problem of original sin” (BT 492 n. iv / 190 n. 1), he appears to suggest that his own take on this subject matter is different; rather than psychological or theological, it is ontological and philosophical. But what this means is contingent on Heidegger’s conception of these disciplines, which differs from that of Kierkegaard. In Heidegger’s view, metaphysics, or ontology, is neither disinterested nor indifferent; and ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*) is essential to the practice of philosophy, rather than psychology. For both Kierkegaard and Heidegger psychology is a science of observation, but for Heidegger, psychology is similar to any other ontic science in that it remains methodically uninvolved with the object of its observation. Just like any other positive science, according to Heidegger, psychology considers mental phenomena as if they were things that are present at hand, and so psychology is not *in* anxiety when it observes and depicts it, or at least, *insofar as* it is a science, it is not *supposed* to be in such a mood while conducting its observations.²⁶

Thus, on the face of it, it seems that the differences between Kierkegaard and Heidegger, at least when it comes to the subject of anxiety, are merely programmatic or

²⁶ Cf. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 75ff. / 95ff., 160-63 / 213-16.

disciplinary. But these differences are complicated by the differences between the ways in which these thinkers *conceive* of the arrangement of the sciences and other domains of human intellectual or creative engagement. While in the case of Kierkegaard, it is a matter for speculative practice of the kind that is to be found in Hegel's arrangement of the disciplines, and especially in his conception of psychology as the "science of the subjective spirit" (CA 23), for Heidegger, it is a matter of reacting to the *actual* development of the positive sciences since Comte (and Brentano), and especially to the threats of psychologism. In other respects, however, Heidegger reiterates Kierkegaard. He does that when he considers sin a phenomenon of existence; when he insists that insofar as the concept of sin has a place, it is nonetheless in theology; when he stresses the qualitative difference between this concept and the concepts of guilt and anxiety; and when he states that one cannot simply construct the concept of sin on the basis of the concepts of guilt or anxiety. With respect to each of these points, there is no disagreement between these two thinkers. Yet there is one crucial difference, which is perhaps the only difference between them when it comes to the way in which they write about anxiety: While Kierkegaard makes a point by considering anxiety *with regard to* the dogma of original sin, Heidegger makes a point by considering anxiety and guilt *regardless* of this dogma.

It may be the case that secularization is nothing but this regarding or disregarding, or even the *possibility* of disregarding, which is already implied in the specification that the dogma of sin is "kept in mind" in the psychological deliberation on anxiety. But when Heidegger insists that not even the possibility of sin is confirmed in his existential

analysis of being guilty, he appears to disregard sin slightly *too* forcibly.²⁷ For why not just deny sin itself, which is necessarily an act? And what remains of the notion of guilt if it is indeed altogether dissociated from even the possibility of sin?²⁸ Too forcible a disregard renders that which is disregarded conspicuous, which in this case is sin, alongside Kierkegaard and the religious tradition. Explicitly disregarding the concept of sin, Heidegger presents us in *Being and Time* with a secularized version of Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety. But as indicated by the very explicitness of this disregard, the secularization remains incomplete.

In continuation of this, I argue, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger *further* secularizes anxiety by locating the experience of nothingness in the mundane, in boredom, by conceptualizing it in a non-theological context, i.e., without utilizing terms that appear to belong to religious discourse and without utilizing the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity²⁹—which maps onto the distinction between the sacred and the profane and is essentially made by, and from within, religiosity.³⁰ This is why there is almost no mention of falling, guilt, and the call of conscience in this text, although other concepts from *Being and Time* are widely utilized

²⁷ Cf. HCT 283 / 391, where the denial is even more emphatic.

²⁸ Cf. Karl Löwith, "Grundzüge der Entwicklung der Phänomenologie zur Philosophie und ihr Verhältnis zur protestantischen Theologie (Fortsetzung)," *Theologische Rundschau*, 2 (1930), 336.

²⁹ The notion of authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) is not at all absent from this text but the notion of inauthenticity (*Uneigentlichkeit*) only appears late in it, i.e., in §70 (a), 295 / 427-28, and exclusively in the context of Heidegger's consideration of his *Being and Time* analysis of death (which is another theme that is otherwise tellingly absent from the lecture course) and in order to exemplify what would count as a failure to capture the "formal indicatory character" of his philosophical concepts (a failure that in this case consists in the consideration of death as something that is present at hand).

³⁰ It is therefore not without significance that the only example that Heidegger can find for the third form of boredom, profound boredom, is "to walk through the streets of a large city on a Sunday afternoon." ["es ist einem langweilig", wenn man an einem Sonntagnachmittag durch die Straßen einer Großstadt geht."] FCM 135 / 204.

in it, and why there is little need to deny the theological significance of the investigation.³¹

I will explain this point by a short consideration of Hubert Dreyfus and Jane Rubin's reading of the second division of *Being and Time*, which is presented in the appendix to Dreyfus' widely influential commentary on *Being and Time*, *Being in The World*, a work otherwise fully dedicated to the first division of *Being and Time*.³²

(d) From Anxiety to Boredom

According to Dreyfus and Rubin, notwithstanding the centrality of the concept of anxiety in *Being and Time*, "Heidegger elaborated his account of anxiety as a privileged revealing experience of man's essential nullity and rootlessness for the last time in his 1929 lecture 'What Is Metaphysics?'"³³ Dreyfus and Rubin point to this seeming

³¹ The notion of "bad conscience" ("schlechtes Gewissen") is mentioned once in the analysis of boredom (FCM 78 / 118), but it is not used on this occasion as a technical term, and though Heidegger appears to admit here of the possibility of having a bad conscience about being bored, one should take care to notice that what he in fact says here is that bad conscience accompanies one's *escape from* (or repression of) one's boredom, that is, one's *avoidance* of acknowledging that what one feels, that the mood that permeates one through and through, is to be called boredom. Having just denied the applicability of the distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness to the moods, Heidegger cannot simply say here that one is unconsciously bored (but nor could Freud, who also at least nominally denies the possibility of unconscious affect, say such a thing, even though Heidegger suggests that this is how psychoanalysis would have it). Heidegger therefore implies here himself, though without making it explicit at any stage of the inquiry, that the endeavor to avoid the acknowledgment of one's state of boredom by feeling guilty about it is necessarily always already successful. Later on in the text, however, where he is about to complete his detailed example of the second form of boredom, he describes this experience, which takes place after the fact (i.e., after the dinner party), in a manner that makes it appear like an experience of regret or, indeed, an experience of a bad conscience—specifically about having wasted one's time in a dinner party; and yet he denies precisely that this boredom is merely the "ensuing bad mood [*nachträgliche Verstimmung*] over the fact that I have now sacrificed and lost this evening" (FCM 109-10 / 166). As noted above, I do not wish to suggest that all theological connotations are eliminated in this text, not only because notions such as *Augenblick* and *Offenbarkeit*, which are systematically utilized as technical terms in the analysis of boredom, would then serve as counterexamples, but also because I believe that this is impossible. What is nonetheless possible is to speak of *degrees* of explicitness, and in this regard it is undeniable that the engagement with theology is less explicit in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* than in *Being and Time*.

³² Hubert Dreyfus and Jane Rubin, "Kierkegaard, Division II, and Later Heidegger," published as an appendix to Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division One* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995), 283-340.

³³ *Ibid.*, 336.

conceptual discontinuity in support of their wider argument concerning Heidegger's "incomplete secularization of Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety."³⁴ Heidegger's discontinuation of the use of the concept of anxiety, they explain, is a logical consequence of his secularization of the sphere of existence to which Kierkegaard refers in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* as "religiousness A." Religiousness A is distinguished by Kierkegaard from religiousness B in that it is not yet, or not "decisively," a Christian religiousness but rather "the religiousness of immanence."³⁵ Along with anxiety, Dreyfus and Rubin further observe, Heidegger also "drops all talk of fleeing in [*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*] (1927) and thereafter."³⁶ They argue that Heidegger does this because his account of falling as fleeing in *Being and Time*—that is, falling as yielding to a *temptation* due to which Dasein "*flees* in the face of itself into the 'they'" ("das Verfallen des Daseins, als welches es vor sich selbst *flieht* in das Man"; 368 / 322)—is a "psychological" redundancy in Heidegger's otherwise purely "structural" description of Dasein's falling, that is, its description as an unmotivated movement that ensues from no more than a *tendency* that characterizes the very structure of existence.³⁷ "If anxiety is the truth of Dasein's condition and the truth sets it free," Dreyfus and Rubin wonder, "why doesn't Dasein seek anxiety rather than flee it?"³⁸

³⁴ Ibid, 335.

³⁵ Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 456ff., especially 466, 468-69. It must also be noted in this respect that Kierkegaard regards here the "totality of guilt-consciousness" as "the most edifying aspect of religiousness A" (469), and that he states that "even the decisive definition of guilt-consciousness is still within immanence" (478); however, beyond "guilt-consciousness," there is "sin-consciousness" and "[i]n religiousness A offence is not possible" (490-2).

³⁶ Dreyfus and Rubin, "Kierkegaard," 336.

³⁷ Compare with Dreyfus' chapter on falling in *Being-in-the-World*, 225-37, especially pp. 233-34, in which Dreyfus focuses on what he regards as the "structural" sense of Heidegger's notion of falling, leaving the discussion about its "psychological" sense for the appendix.

³⁸ Dreyfus and Rubin, "Kierkegaard," 335. See next chapter for further consideration of Dreyfus and Rubin's reading in light of my more detailed interpretation of Heidegger's existential analytic. With respect to this particular claim, however, it can already be noted that they could just as well ask why Dasein does not kill itself, and that Heidegger addresses precisely this problem in the aforementioned first part of §70 in

More generally, they inquire: “Why [according to Heidegger] are we the kind of beings that can’t face being the kind of being we are?”³⁹

In the absence of answers to these questions, Dreyfus and Rubin state that “in spite of his thoroughness and consistency in every other respect, Heidegger never raises these questions and, in fact, seems completely oblivious to the major inconsistency his account of falling as fleeing introduces into his otherwise successful secularization of Religiousness A.” “In spite of his denial and against his will,” they further contend, “Heidegger seems to have taken over from Kierkegaard a dogmatic-Christian conception of society and of sinfulness.” It is for this reason, they explain, that after “What Is Metaphysics?”, Heidegger “gives up his existential account of anxiety”—along with his account of falling in the sense of “a motivated cover-up of Dasein’s essential nullity and unsettledness.”⁴⁰

Dreyfus and Rubin do not mention the extensive and systematic analysis of boredom that Heidegger carries out in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Published in 1983, some eight years prior to their own commentary on the second division of *Being and Time*, this analysis is potentially as consequential to the history of philosophy and psychology as Kierkegaard’s 1844 account of anxiety. Dreyfus and Rubin also fail to take note of the fact that Heidegger’s July 1929 lecture “What is Metaphysics?”—he point following which according to them he “gives up his existential account of anxiety”—is

The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics (291-98 / 421-31; see especially 294 / 426). In this section, Heidegger guards against a certain “misunderstanding” of his philosophical concepts, i.e., the misunderstanding that consists in relating to them as things that are present at hand, as well as against the failure to grasp their formal-indicatory character. For an interpretation of this section, focusing on Heidegger’s explication of his formal-indicatory method, see R. J. A. van Dijk, “Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Zur formalanzeigenden Struktur der philosophischen Begriffe bei Heidegger,” *Heidegger Studies*, 7, 1991, 89-109.

³⁹ Dreyfus and Rubin, “Kierkegaard,” 334.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 335-36.

where he presents boredom as a basic philosophical mood for the first time in his published works.⁴¹ It is true that Heidegger mentions boredom in that text only in passing and that he does that just prior to making a similar remark regarding joy.⁴² It is also true that he then goes on to elaborate on anxiety, rather than boredom or joy, conceiving of only it as an “originary attunement that in the most proper sense of unveiling makes manifest the nothing” [“eine Stimmung... die ihrem eigensten Enthüllungssinne nach das Nichts offenbart”]. But the brief remarks that Heidegger makes here about boredom already anticipate the main points of the extensive analysis that he would present in his 1929/30 winter seminar on the fundamental concepts of metaphysics, namely, (a) the distinction between a superficial form of boredom, exemplified by the case of being bored by a book, and profound boredom (*tiefe Langeweile*), which happens “when ‘it is boring for one’” [“wenn ‘es einem langweilig ist’”]; (b) the idea that, “This boredom manifests beings as a whole” [“Diese Langeweile offenbart das Seiende im Ganzen”]; and (c) the motif of profound boredom as “drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog” [“Die Tiefe Langeweile, in den Abgründen des Daseins wie schweigender Nebel hin- und herziehend”] (87-88 / 110-11; trans. modified).

Although Dreyfus and Rubin’s reading is instructive, their criticism seems inadequate in view of the style of discourse and manner of thinking that Heidegger imposes on his readers and interpreters—as he does, for instance, when he writes: “We cannot ‘avoid’ a ‘circular’ proof in the existential analytic, because such an analytic does not do *any* proving *at all* by the rules of ‘the logic of consistency.’” [“In der existenzialen Analytik

⁴¹ WM 110 / 87. See Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, “Editor’s Epilogue” in FCM 372 / 541.

⁴² Heidegger (87 / 110) specifically describes this joy as “our joy in the presence of the Dasein—and not simply of the person—of a human being whom we love.” [“die Freude an der Gegenwart des Daseins—nicht der bloßen Person—eines geliebtes Menschen.”] Marion points out that joy as a possibility of manifestation (*Offenbarung*) is conjoined here with love (*Reduction and Givenness*, 173).

kann ein ‘Zirkel’ im Beweis nicht einmal ‘vermeiden’ werden, weil die *überhaupt nicht* nach Regeln der ‘Konsequenzlogik’ beweist.”] (BT 363 / 315). The outstanding terminological and conceptual abundance, complexity, novelty and modularity, the hermeneutic circular way of reasoning, the questionable etymologies, the mode of philosophizing that sets itself avowedly as a project of repetition (*Wiederholung*) of the Western philosophical and religious traditions—these and other idiosyncratic characteristic features of Heidegger’s writing rule out strict ruptures and complete “giving up” of concepts of the kind that Dreyfus and Rubin claim to detect in the development of his work. Instead, I suggest that the concept of anxiety as a “privileged revealing mood” is not given up or abandoned but merely undergoes adjustments, which can indeed be adequately described in terms of secularization, so as to reappear in the winter semester of 1929/30 in the form of the basic mood of boredom. This description is essentially in agreement with Dreyfus and Rubin’s reading, but with a different conclusion, a conclusion that instead of detecting aporias in *Being and Time* opens up the interpretation of Heidegger’s work to sociohistorical contextualization.

The immediate context of the transition from anxiety to boredom in Heidegger’s thought is that of the later years of the Weimar Republic and Heidegger’s return from Marburg to Freiburg following the publication of *Being and Time*. To consider Heidegger’s concept of boredom as a secularized version of his concept of anxiety is to suggest that *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, at least its first part, be read as a text that still belongs to what is commonly regarded as the early phase of his work—despite its coming after *Being and Time*, and although Heidegger was forty years old when he delivered this lecture course. This phase preceded the “reversal” or “turn”

(*Kehre*) of his philosophy and its explicit entanglement with ideology, and began with the years leading to Heidegger's 1919 announcement of his "break" with the "system of Catholicism."⁴³ To this phase of Heidegger's writing belong declarations such as "philosophy must, in its radical, self-reliant questionability, be in principle *a-theistic*." ["Philosophie muß in ihrer radikalen, sich auf sich selbst stellenden Fraglichkeit prinzipiell *a-theistisch* sein."] ⁴⁴ as well as provocative statements such as we have seen earlier in this chapter, that "theology is a positive science, and as such... is absolutely different from philosophy." ["Die Theologie ist eine positive Wissenschaft und als solche... von der Philosophie absolut verschieden."] (PT 41 / 49; italics omitted). In the 1930s, by contrast, Heidegger preferred to "keep silent" on the question concerning the relation between philosophy and theology and appeared to be no longer concerned with theological debates.⁴⁵

Thus, boredom makes its appearance at a decisive moment in the development of Heidegger's thought, but this moment, the moment of, or just prior to, the "turn," has more frequently been considered in terms of historicization, ideologization, or

⁴³ But not yet with "Christianity per se or metaphysics." Heidegger's letter to Engelbert Krebs from January 9, 1919, quoted by Rüdiger Safranski in *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 107-8.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (1921/22) in *Gesamtausgabe, II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen, Band 61* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1992), appendix II, 197. Heidegger immediately qualifies this statement: "[Philosophy] must, precisely in light of its basic tendency, not falsely claim to have God or to determine God. The more radical it is, the more determinedly it is an 'away' from him, and precisely in the radical exclusion of the 'away' a difficult 'with' him." ["<Die Philosophie> darf sich gerade ob ihrer Grundtendenz nicht vermessen, Gott zu haben und zu bestimmen. Je radikaler sie ist, umso bestimmter ist sie ein weg von ihm, also gerade im radikalen Vollzug des 'weg' ein eigenes schwieriges 'bei' ihm."] Translation is from Wolfe, *Heidegger's Eschatology*, 93.

⁴⁵ According to Pöggeler (*Philosophie*, 108), Heidegger announced his determination to "keep silent" on the question about the relation between philosophy and theology at the outset of a December 1930 talk to the Evangelical-Theological Association in Marburg, titled "Philosophieren und Glauben: Das Wesen der Wahrheit." As noted, Habermas ("World and Worldview," 440) has associated between Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche and Hölderlin and a "*neopagan turn* that pushed away Christian themes into the background in favor of a mythologizing recourse to the archaic." Likewise, Baring has more recently stated that, "In the 1930's theological debates were not Heidegger's concern" ("A Secular Kierkegaard," 71).

politicization than in terms of secularization. In this decisive moment, Heidegger presents his students with a “decisive question” (*entscheidende Frage*; FCM 77 / 115). He repeats this question in various formulations throughout his analysis of boredom: “Has man today become boring for himself?” [“ist der Mensch heute sich selbst langweilig geworden?”] (ibid., 77 / 115, 162 / 242). One may consider this question rhetorical, whether in the pregnant or in the dismissive sense of the word, and not expect an answer to it. In the concluding section of the first part of the lecture course (§38),⁴⁶ Heidegger expresses his concerns with the “contemporary situation” (*heutige Lage*) more explicitly and with an air of growing urgency, repeatedly complaining about “the absence of oppressiveness” [“das Ausbleiben der Bedrängnis”] as that which “fundamentally oppresses and leaves us most profoundly empty” [“im Grunde Bedrängende und zutiefst Leerlassende...”] (164 / 244). In the next section, §39, which opens the second and final part of the lecture course, just prior to his mentioning of the “event” (*Ereignis*) of the Great War, which has “pass[ed] us by without leaving a trace” [“spurlos an uns vorübergegangen”], and which constitutes the only occurrence of the word *Ereignis* in this text, one encounters this statement: “We must first call for someone capable of instilling terror into our Dasein again” [“Wir müssen erst wieder rufen nach dem, der unserem Dasein einen Schrecken einzujagen vermag.”] (172 / 255-56).

Winfried Franzen detects in these passages, regardless of the detailed analysis of boredom that precedes them, a “motif disposing to national-socialistic engagement.”⁴⁷ He

⁴⁶ The lecture course was divided by Heidegger himself into three parts: (a) “Preliminary Appraisal” (“Vorbetrachtung”), (b) Part One (“Awakening a Fundamental Mood in Our Philosophizing”; “Die Weckung Einer Grundstimmung unseres Philosophierens”), and (c) Part Two (“What Is World?”; “Was ist Welt?”). The subdivision of the text into chapters and sections are by the editor, von Herrmann. See “Editor’s Epilogue,” FCM 372-73 / 539-40.

⁴⁷ Winfried Franzen, “Die Sehnsucht nach Härte und Schwere: Über ein zum NS-Engagement disponierendes Motiv in Heideggers Vorlesung ‘Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik’ von 1929/1930,” in

counts the ten occurrences of the word “oppressiveness” (*Bedrängnis*) in §38 and the more than dozen times in which the closely related word “need” (*Not*) occurs in it. Franzen places these notions on a par with danger, terror, hardship, severity, force, power, strength, and greatness (*Gefahr, Schrecken, Härte, Schwere, Kraft, Macht, Stärke, and Größe*),⁴⁸ claiming that Heidegger laments their absence, and that this attitude is comparable with ideas that Adolf Hitler advances in *Mein Kampf*.⁴⁹ Franzen also points out that §38 is situated more or less in the middle of the lecture course and that the lecture course itself is situated halfway between *Being and Time*, which Heidegger submitted for publication in 1926, and the *Rektoratsrede* of 1933.⁵⁰

Also without taking boredom into consideration, Jürgen Habermas approves of Franzen’s interpretation and speaks of these passages as an early expression of the “real invasion” of conservative-revolutionary “ideological motifs. . . into Heidegger’s self-understanding,” an invasion anticipating the more explicit “conflation” of Heidegger’s political and philosophical commitments after the rise of Hitler.⁵¹ Habermas dates this “real invasion” to 1929, confirming Otto Pöggeler’s description of this year as one of “crisis” in Heidegger’s thought.⁵² To support this periodization, Habermas cites, among other evidence, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, where Heidegger “relates himself to writers” such as Spengler, Klages, and Ziegler (all of whom were associated with the conservative revolutionary movement) and “swears by the heroism of audacious Dasein against the despised normality of bourgeois misery: ‘Mystery is lacking in our

Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie. eds. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 78. Cf. Goodstein, *Experience without Qualities*, 308ff.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 84, 86.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 90, n. 12.

⁵¹ Habermas, “Work and Weltanschauung.”

⁵² See Otto Pöggeler, “Den Führer führen? Heidegger und kein Ende,” *Philosophische Rundschau* 32, no. 1 (1985), 39.

Dasein, and with it the inner horror which every mystery bears with it and which gives Dasein its greatness.”⁵³

This is but one of many reasons why the year 1929 has been considered the beginning of a new era in Heidegger’s thought.⁵⁴ But as a beginning of an era, it must also be an end of another. Habermas himself links “the invasion of the philosophy of *Being and Time* by ideology” to Heidegger’s pushing “away of Christian themes into the background.”⁵⁵ Although Habermas apparently does not intend, at least in this context, to unveil potential problems in the relation between theology and philosophy in Heidegger’s work but only to discuss the problem of Heidegger’s political engagements *as* a philosopher after 1929, he here describes a *shift from theology to ideology* rather than a discontinuation of a purely philosophical project.⁵⁶

This description situates boredom in an interesting spot, between theology and ideology, between a movement of secularization, or “detheologization,”⁵⁷ of Christian anthropology and psychology and a movement of ideologization or politicization. Section 38 is situated in the middle of the lecture course as the final section of its first part. It is

⁵³ Ibid., 441. Heidegger’s original words read “Das *Geheimnis* fehlt in unserem Dasein, und damit bleibt der innere Schrecken aus, den jedes Geheimnis bei sich trägt und der dem Dasein seine Größe gibt.” FCM 163-64 / 244.

⁵⁴ Other evidence that Habermas presents to support his “thesis that from around 1929 on, Heidegger’s thought exhibits a *conflation* of philosophical theory with ideological motifs” include (a) Heidegger’s engagement with the writings of Hölderlin and Nietzsche, which “paved the way for the *neopagan turn* that pushed away Christian themes into the background in favor of a mythologizing recourse to the archaic”; (b) the change of “Heidegger’s understanding of his role as a philosopher,” which Habermas associates with both the Davos Debate, which took place in March of that same year, and the finalization of Heidegger’s “break” with Husserl; and (c) the fact that Heidegger “opened himself up to Young-Conservative diagnoses of his time, even in his classroom,” as exemplified, according to Habermas, by §38 of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. See Habermas, “Work and Weltanschauung,” 438-41.

⁵⁵ “Work and Weltanschauung,” 441.

⁵⁶ Which for Habermas is a project that is exclusively motivated by the force of the better argument.

⁵⁷ Heidegger employs the word *enttheologisieren* at least once in *Being and Time*, and he does that upon describing not his own project but that which has happened in modern times to the Christian definition of man as a finite being made in the image of God: “In modern times the Christian definition has been deprived of its theological character [*enttheologisiert*].” [“Die christliche Definition wurde im Verlauf der Neuzeit enttheologisiert.”]

where the analysis of boredom is brought to a closure in a discussion of the specific characteristics of deep boredom. Having repeatedly complained about the oppression of the absence of oppression and need, Heidegger concludes this section by telling us students and readers that we should “summon the courage of mood for what this fundamental attunement gives us to know.” [“den Mut aufbringen zu dem, was diese Grundstimmung uns zu wissen gibt.”] (167 / 248-49). It is only in the next section, §39, which opens the second part of the lecture course, that Heidegger says, not in many words but in one statement: “We must first call for someone capable of instilling terror into our Dasein again.” [“Wir müssen erst wieder rufen nach dem, der unserem Dasein einen Schrecken einzujagen vermag.”] (172 / 255).

Insofar as such periodizations are at all valid or helpful,⁵⁸ the transition from anxiety to boredom should be seen as the culmination of a process and the end of a period. On the one hand, the absence of anxiety in the analysis of boredom indicates the possibility of a

⁵⁸ Claims about the development of Heidegger’s thought can be divided into such that emphasize continuities and such that emphasize discontinuities in it. While French commentators such as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe have emphasized the coherence of Heidegger’s work, Habermas and Franzen are clearly concerned with detecting discontinuities in it and especially with exposing the process of its “politicization.” See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, trans. Chris Turner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). See especially pp. 18-19, where Lacoue-Labarthe states that Heidegger’s “commitment of 1933 is neither an accident nor an error” but “entirely consistent with his thought.” It is also noteworthy that this book’s epigraph, which is taken from Heidegger’s “The Overcoming of Metaphysics” (“Überwindung der Metaphysik”; written circa 1938-39), invokes precisely the issue of the lack of need as that which oppresses us the most. For Lacoue-Labarthe, it is this need (*Not*), the need that is the product of the “death of God,” that “underlies Heidegger’s protest in the *Rectoral Address*” and “not simply [the need ensuing from] the economic vortex into which Germany is sinking” or “the collapse of the Weimar Republic” (ibid., 20). Habermas, on the other hand, writes, “One does Heidegger a favor when one emphasizes the autonomy of his thought during this most productive phase [i.e., up to 1929]... particularly against Heidegger’s later self-stylizations, against his overemphasis on continuity.” This approach also leads Habermas to draw a clear-cut distinction between Heidegger’s life and work (as indicated by his essay’s title, “Work and Weltanschauung”). Thus when Habermas protests against the absence of expressions of guilt in Heidegger’s public life after the Second World War, he explains that “what makes Heidegger into a manifestation, typical for his time, of a widely influential postwar mentality concerns his person—not his work” (454). A different approach is suggested by de Vries, who doubts that the question of Heidegger’s life and work will ever be solved and, in accordance, emphasizes the continuity of Heidegger’s work. In doing so, however, de Vries primarily focuses not on Heidegger’s relation to politics, like Lacoue-Labarthe, but on his relation to religion and especially on his hermeneutics of formal indications, which de Vries regards as key to the understanding of the overall continuity of Heidegger’s work. See de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, 171.

complete departure from the Christian-psychological tradition of understanding anxiety in ambiguous relation to guilt, and of presupposing it as the intermediate term that explains the possibility of becoming sinful. On the other hand, the absence of moods such as terror, fright, and horror (*Schrecken*, *Erschrecken*, *Entsetzen*) in the analysis of boredom shows that this text does not yet belong to the 1930s, when Heidegger is again mostly concerned with anxiety-related moods⁵⁹ and only rarely refers to boredom as a basic philosophical mood.⁶⁰ As with any other periodization, this one is to a certain degree arbitrary; but it nonetheless serves as a heuristic device with which to explore the extent to which and the manner in which boredom is excluded, perhaps equally, from systems of ideology and religiosity.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Fright (*Erschrecken*) and horror (*Entsetzen*) are the basic moods of the “other beginning” of philosophy—that is, of philosophy after Nietzsche—while the basic mood of its “first beginning” is *Erstaunen* (astonishment), which is Heidegger’s rendering of Aristotle’s *thaumazein* (*Metaphysics* 1.982b). See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected „Problems“ of „logic“* (1937/38), trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 133-63, appendix 168ff.; *Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählte „Probleme“ „der Logik,“* GA 45 (1984), 153-90, appendix, 195ff. The theme of philosophy’s other beginning is also at the center of Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy*, written in the same time period (see, for example, 322-23 / 458, 340 / 483-84; *Entsetzen* is translated here by Emad and Maly as “freeing dismay”). For a discussion of Heidegger’s concept of philosophy’s other beginning, see Pöggeler, *Denkweg*, ch. 8. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 17, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁶⁰ Important exceptions include (a) the occurrence of boredom in the 1934/35 lecture course on Hölderlin’s poetry, where Heidegger remarks that even though boredom is a “dull, vacuous, and dreary lack of attunement” [“Weise der Stimmung, die wir als das Fade und Leere und Trockene der Ungestimmtheit kennen”], it “can develop into a basic mood [*Grundstimmung*],” see Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin’s Hymns „Germania“ and „The Rhine“*, trans. William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 125; *Hölderlin’s Hymns „Germanien“ und „Der Rhein“* (1934/35), GA 39, 1999 [1980], 142; (b) boredom’s appearance at the outset of the 1935 lecture course *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1-2 / 3-4), where Heidegger says that the “first of all questions,” “Why are there beings at all rather than nothing?,” may be asked not only out of despair (*Verzweiflung*) and exultation (*Jubel*), but also out of boredom (*Langeweile*); and (c) Heidegger’s brief reference to “total boredom” (*völlige Langeweile*) as the “hidden goal” of modern science in *Contributions to Philosophy*, 109 / 157. Heidegger considers boredom once again much later in a speech from 1961 celebrating the seven hundredth anniversary of his hometown, Meßkirch. Here the question of boredom reappears in the same formulation in which it is introduced in “What Is Metaphysics?” and in which it is repeated throughout the analysis of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*: “Steht es am Ende so mit uns, daß eine tiefe Langeweile in den Abgründen unseres Daseins hin und her zieht wie ein schleichernder Nebel?”. GA 16: 579.

⁶¹ That this is not necessarily always so in Christianity is suggested by Pascal when he writes in his description of the sufferings of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Jesus finds himself in boredom” [“Jésus dans l’ennui”]. Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 749, p. 558. Translation is according to Carlson in Marion, *Reduction and Givenness*, 190.

This context is important, and it must be kept in mind as one examines the development of Heidegger's phenomenology of moods after *Being and Time*. As Dreyfus and Rubin rightly point out—although they do so without attributing significance to the political dimensions of this change⁶²—the focus of Heidegger's deliberations indeed shifted in that period from the individual to the collective. “The possibility of saving the culture as a whole,” as they write, “and not individuals, is the central concern of [Heidegger's] later work.”⁶³ Dreyfus and Rubin argue that this explains why Heidegger “elaborated his account of anxiety as a privileged revealing experience of man's essential nullity and rootlessness for the last time in ‘What Is Metaphysics?’” But in doing so, they in effect place an emphasis not on anxiety, which would seem to corroborate their argument that it is an inessential remnant of Kierkegaardian dogmatic-psychological influences but on “man's essential nullity and rootlessness,” which is supposedly given up in virtue of the fact alone that the protagonist of Heidegger's deliberations, if implicit or explicit, increasingly takes on the shape of a peoplehood rather than personhood. This shift of focus may indeed explain why being-towards-death, i.e., the notion that Dasein is the basis of its own nullity, is a theme that appears to be given up after *Being and Time*. In the proper sense of the word, death is an event that happens if not only, than at least primarily, to individuals; it is presumably only metaphorically referred to when it comes to designate the termination of collectivities or abstract entities, such as languages.⁶⁴ This shift of focus, however, does not explain why Heidegger should “[give] up the existential account of anxiety” *itself*.

⁶² “Kierkegaard,” 361 n. 65.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 340.

⁶⁴ Cf. BT 209 / 166, where Heidegger wonders, “What kind of being does language have, if there can be such a thing as a ‘dead’ language?” [“Welcher Art ist das Sein der Sprache, daß sie ‘tot’ sein kann?”].

And indeed, although Dreyfus and Rubin suggest that they think that Heidegger should do so—so as to allow for a purely structural, rather than merely dogmatic-psychological, description of existence—they do not mean to say that Heidegger himself realized that his account is inconsistent and should therefore be amended or abandoned, or to suggest that this is what he actually did but without acknowledging the inconsistencies that had led him to do so. It is a certain *kind* of anxiety, they say, that is given up, an anxiety associated with the notion of falling as fleeing and succumbing to temptation, with sinfulness. As they point out, in his later years Heidegger became increasingly interested in other sorts of anxiety and especially with anxiety about technology. “Heidegger the thinker,” they write—parenthetically distinguishing him from Heidegger “the hermeneutic phenomenologist with a preontological understanding of the sense of being”—“interprets anxiety as a specific response to the rootlessness of the contemporary technological world.”⁶⁵ It is this latter kind of anxiety, Dreyfus and Rubin explain, that we find in the new introduction that Heidegger writes for the 1949 edition of “What Is Metaphysics?”, where, far from shying away from the statements he made about anxiety two decades earlier, he explicitly confirms the existential significance of this basic mood—although he only does that briefly and in the midst of a torrent of rhetorical questions about the “oblivion of being” (*Seinsvergessenheit*).⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Dreyfus and Rubin, “Kierkegaard,” 337.

⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, “Introduction to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’” (1949), trans. Walker Kaufmann, in *Pathmarks*, 281-82, trans. modified; “Einleitung zu ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’”, in *Wegmarken*, GA 9, 2013 [1976], 371:

If the oblivion of being [*Seinsvergessenheit*] that has been described here should be our situation, would there not be occasion enough for a thinking that recalls being to experience a genuine horror? What can such thinking do other than to endure anxiously this destiny of being, so as first of all to bring the oblivion of being to bear upon us? But how could thought achieve this if the anxiety destined to it were merely a mood of depression [*gedrückte Stimmung*]? What does such anxiety, as a destiny of being, have to do with psychology or psychoanalysis?

Dreyfus and Rubin should have also mentioned in this regard the 1943 “Postscript to ‘What Is Metaphysics?’” (“Nachwort zu: ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’”), where Heidegger not only confirms the existential significance of anxiety but also elaborates on it in considerable detail. As I have noted, throughout the 1930s Heidegger explored various basic moods that are closely related to anxiety, such as astonishment, horror, fright, terror, and “holy mourning.”⁶⁷ Hence, it is clear that despite or regardless of a shift in focus from the individual to the collective, whether essential or merely thematic, Heidegger never really gives up his existential account of anxiety. The moods come neither from within nor from without; in spite of the individualizing effect that Heidegger ascribes to anxiety in *Being and Time*, it is clear that it can also be worked out as a collective experience.⁶⁸

This very same shift of focus, however, does lead to the exclusion of boredom. This exclusion becomes explicit in Heidegger’s 1934/35 lecture course on Hölderlin’s poetry,

[Wäre, wenn es mit der Seinsvergessenheit so stünde, nicht Veranlassung genug, daß ein Denken, das an das Sein denkt, in den Schrecken gerät, demgemäß es nichts anderes vermag, als dieses Geschick des Seins in der Angst auszuhalten, um erst das Denken an die Seinsvergessenheit zum Austrag zu bringen? Ob jedoch ein Denken dies vermöchte, solange ihm die so zugeschickte Angst nur eine gedrückte Stimmung wäre? Was hat das Seinsgeschick dieser Angst mit Psychologie und Psychoanalyse zu tun?]

Dreyfus and Rubin (“Kierkegaard,” 336-7) wrongly suggest that the “oblivion of being” is a theme that belongs to the later Heidegger, associating this in fact long-standing concern with Heidegger’s growing concern with technology. These are of course related, but unlike the question about technology, the problem of the oblivion of being constitutes the *explicit* point of departure of *Being and Time* (21 / 2); and as Heidegger reminds us in his “Letter on ‘Humanism’” (250 / 328), the oblivion of being is the “fundamental experience” (*Grunderfahrung*) of that book.

⁶⁷ See GA 39: 47ff.; GA 45: 195ff.; GA 65: 14-15, 22, 157-58, 396, 483; and GA 67: 17-18.

⁶⁸ It is likewise clear that collectivities themselves are individualized entities. Thus when Löwith describes how unexpectedly Heidegger shifted his focus from the Dasein of *Being and Time*—which is always already mine, which is disclosed in relation to my own death, and which shows thereby that time itself is primarily finite—over to the “German Dasein,” an entity which is apparently different in kind, Löwith makes the observation that at bottom these two “Daseins” are entirely consistent: “Und doch ist der Sprung von der ontologischen Analyse des Todes zu Heideggers Schlageter-Rede... nur ein Übergang vom je vereinzelt Dasein zu einem je allgemeinen, aber in seiner Allgemeinheit nicht minder vereinzelt, nämlich deutschen.” Löwith, *Mein Leben*, 34-44, 38. Nonetheless, insofar as death still remains one’s “ownmost” possibility of becoming impossible, the anxiety of being-towards-death can only be experienced by the *single* individual.

where he regards authentic time as the “time of the peoples” (*Zeit der Völker*), a time that is “essentially long” (*wesenhaft lang*) but in which there is nonetheless “no boredom and no amusement” (“keine Langeweile und keine Kurzweil”) but a “persistent waiting *for* and abiding *of the event*” (“ein unausgesetztes Warten und Harren *auf das Ereignis*”; 48-53 / 50-56; trans. modified). Conceived in terms of secularization, the transition from anxiety to boredom is thus an end of a period. It is a moment in which Heidegger is still concerned with the single individual but also opens himself up to the moods of the public, becomes increasingly concerned with the here and now, but not yet with a “vision of a new rootedness,”⁶⁹ a moment in which he insists that to philosophize is to feel at home nowhere (FCM 2-6 / 7-8).

This context (i.e., that of the development of Heidegger’s philosophy against the political background of the later years of the Weimar Republic) is crucial for understanding what may otherwise appear as a merely thematic change that does not necessarily point towards wider developments. This context should be kept in mind as we examine the role of anxiety in *Being and Time* in the next chapter. But our aim here is not determine whether the German society in 1929 was anxious or bored. Rather, the sociohistorical context with which I am primarily concerned is that of the more general, yet no less concrete, process of secularization. Granted, there are still important methodological questions that must be addressed in order to consider Heidegger’s work not only as a landmark in the history of philosophy but also as a revealing instance in the social history of the secularization of Europe. But one can already see that the transition

⁶⁹ This expression is from Heidegger’s 1955 address “Gelassenheit” (“Ausblick auf eine neue Bodenständigkeit”; GA 16, 2000: 528); quoted here from Dreyfus and Rubin (“Kierkegaard,” 337). See Martin Heidegger, “Memorial Address” (1955) in *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John Anderson and Hans Freund (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 55.

from anxiety to boredom cannot be considered a linear process. In the case of Heidegger, the process was discontinued due to growing politicization and the anxious expectation of an event. And as we shall likewise see from the viewpoint of the history of psychology in chapters 4 and 5, the wider social transition from anxiety to boredom, too, has been a complex dialectical process that rather than culminating in the full transformation of anxiety into boredom resulted in the bifurcation of anxiety into two ideal-typical secular forms: normal anxiety, which is exclusive of fear and guilt and commonly referred to today as “boredom,” and pathological anxiety, which involves fear, often in the shape of guilt, is closely related to depression and other mood disorders, and is almost as prevalent as boredom. In discursive terms, this means that while the domain of boredom’s expansion is primarily designated by the everyday and the colloquial, anxiety has largely proliferated in the realms of the pathological. My suggestion is that these two processes are complementary in that they appear as the emotional aspect of the process of secularization.

Having outlined in this and the previous chapters the general thrust of my argument concerning the transition from anxiety to boredom in Heidegger’s writing, I will now examine the specific role that the concept of anxiety plays in *Being and Time*—keeping in mind the question of its possible interchangeability with boredom at the most fundamental level.

Chapter 3: The Double Movement of *Being and Time*

In this chapter I describe two movements that characterize Heidegger's philosophizing: the linear movement in the direction of becoming more profound (*Richtung des Tieferwerdens*), which determines the course of Heidegger's investigation both in *Being and Time* and in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, and the to-and-fro movement between authenticity and inauthenticity, which complicates the course of the investigation of the former but not the latter text.¹ I show that the to-and-fro movement, or movement of oscillation, is generated due to the methodological suspension of temporality in the preparatory analysis (*vorbereitende Analytik*), to which the first division of *Being and Time* is dedicated. On the basis of this, I argue that since boredom is a concept of time, it *had* to be excluded from this text. I further argue that for the same reason boredom (*Langeweile*) is different from indifference (both *Gleichgültigkeit* and *Indifferenz*), which, like the problem of the oblivion of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), remains, all along—before, in, and after *Being and Time*—at the center of Heidegger's investigations. This is why, notwithstanding the pivotal role played in *Being and Time* by indifference and undetermination, or *indetermination* (*Unbestimmtheit*), boredom does not occur in this text at all, while anxiety dominates it in its entirety. To demonstrate this latter point, I give an account of three anxiety “episodes” that can be singled out in *Being and Time*: anxiety in the face of being in the world as such, anxiety in the face of death, and anxiety in the face of the possibility of

¹ The combination of the two movements in *Being and Time* can be regarded as that which often brings commentators to describe the flow of this text as a “spiraling movement,” as Kisiel does in *Genesis*, 442; or as does Charles Guignon, who in his *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983; 73) remarks that the “structure of the inquiry” in *Being and Time* “is not so much a circle as it is a ‘spiral.’”

repeatability. On the basis of this diagnosis, I finally propose that anxiety is introduced into the text as the mood of Heidegger's "anticipatory resolution" (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*) to repeat the question about the meaning of being and the teachings of his ancient, scholastic, and modern predecessors.

But first the notion of *Stimmung* must be more closely examined. The ultimate objective of my reading of Heidegger is not to describe or explain the development of his thought, but to learn something about the difference between boredom and anxiety *from* the development of his thought, especially in view of the fact that Heidegger is one of the few authors to deal extensively with both of these phenomena and that he ascribes an apparently similar significance to both of them, yet without systematically comparing them. In Heideggerian parlance, both anxiety and boredom are *Stimmungen*. Let us then begin the discussion by clarifying the specific and broader significance of this crucial notion.

(a) The Senses of *Stimmung*

I briefly introduced Heidegger's notion of *Stimmung* in Chapter 1, saying that it is usually translated as mood, attunement, or atmosphere, and that each of these translation options is adequate inasmuch as it expresses Heidegger's intention to overcome the conventional dichotomies of interiority and exteriority, selfhood and worldhood, subjectivity and objectivity, and the like when considering phenomena such as boredom and anxiety. But although no word is perfectly translatable, *Stimmung* presents us with a unique case of "untranslatability,"² and so a few remarks must be made about the

² As Leo Spitzer writes, "It is a fact that the German word 'Stimmung' as such is untranslatable." It is likewise not surprising to find an entry for *Stimmung* in Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables*. See Leo Spitzer, "Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word

semantic field of this widely studied notion before we examine the specific role that it plays in *Being and Time*.

The noun *Stimmung* is derived from the verb *stimmen*, which means “to attune.” The related noun *Stimme* means “voice.” At the cost of downplaying the psychological significance of *Stimmung* (which is adequately captured by “mood”), “attunement” has the merit of preserving the specific acoustic designation of this word—the sense of tuning or attuning as applied to sound instruments or to the human voice.³ *Stimmung*, Heidegger accordingly says, has the sense of melody (FCM 67 / 101). The significance of this sense is made apparent in the ample use that Heidegger makes of vocal and auditory metaphors upon describing the special attention that one can pay once one is courageous (*mutig*) enough to confront anxiety or boredom. In *Being and Time*, it is the “voice of conscience” (*Stimme des Gewissens*; 313 / 268) that conveys the “call” (*Ruf*) that people in their daily occupations and indulgence in idle talk (*Gerede*) fail to hear (*überhören*) due to the “hubbub” (*Lärm*) that is generated by the various sounds that compete for one’s attention in the shape of news and novelties that are only meant to satisfy one’s curiosity (*Neugier*; 315-16 / 271). The one who confronts anxiety—that is, the one who understands oneself authentically in one’s being-towards-death—is able to “hear the call,” which, in contrast to the deafening cacophony of everydayness, speaks without words in the unfamiliar mode of silence (316-17 / 271-2).

“Stimmung,” Parts 1-2, *Traditio* 2-3 (1944-1945), 409-64, 307-64: 411; and Pascal David, “Stimmung,” trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, (ed.) Barbara Cassin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1061-62. See also David Wellbery, “Stimmung” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, Vol. 5: *Postmoderne bis Synästhesie*, eds. Karl-Heinz Barck and Martin Fontius (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), 703-33; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Stimmungen lesen: Über eine verdeckte Wirklichkeit der Literatur* (Munich: Hanser, 2011); Angelika Jacobs, *Stimmungskunst von Novalis bis Hofmannsthal* (IGEL: Hamburg, 2013); and Bollnow, *Wesen der Stimmungen*.

³ *Stimmung* has been ascribed in this sense to instruments since the sixteenth century; and to humans, since the eighteenth century. See David, “Stimmung,” 1061.

Similar is the case of boredom, which Heidegger repeatedly describes as a “silent fog” (*schweigender Nebel*) in the “abysses of Dasein” (*Abgründe des Daseins*; WM 87 / 110; FCM 77 / 115, 78 / 117, 80 / 119; GA 16: 579). When one is attuned to profound boredom (*tiefe Langeweile*), one is “compelled to listen” (“*Gezwungensein zu einem Hören*”; FCM 136 / 205) to what it has to say, to what it “gives us to know” (“*uns zu wissen gibt*”; FCM 167 / 248-49). “This boredom,” Heidegger says, “wishes to tell us something” (“*diese Langeweile uns etwas sagen will*”; 135 / 204). By listening to the silent voice of boredom, one can understand what most of the people most of the time turn a deaf ear to (134-36 / 202-6). As we shall see, in *Being and Time*, the secret message is guilt, which leads us in a convoluted way, via the notions of care and anticipatory resoluteness, to time. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, by contrast, there is hardly any reference to guilt or conscience, and boredom leads us directly—one could even say *too* directly—to the understanding of the essence of time.⁴

Thus beyond the apparently technical sense of attunement, as applied to the sounds of instruments and the human voice, *Stimmung* has a sense that is both psychological and moral—the sense in which something *feels*, or *sounds*, either right or wrong. But while Heidegger’s focus on moods such as anxiety and boredom may create the impression that he is primarily interested in the way that things feel or sound wrong, in *Verstimmung* (resentment) rather than *Stimmung*⁵—just as the voice of conscience is necessarily harsh

⁴ The significance of this sense of *Stimmung* is also demonstrated in Heidegger’s 1955 Cerisy lecture, “What Is Philosophy?” (“Was ist das—die Philosophie?”). Towards the end of the lecture, Heidegger says, “We are trying to listen to the voice [*Stimme*] of being. Into what kind of tuning [*Stimmung*] does this put contemporary thinking?” [“Wir versuchen, auf die Stimme des Seins zu hören. In welche Stimmung bringt sie das heutige Denken?”]. For both the original text and its translation, see Martin Heidegger, “What Is Philosophy?”, trans. William Kluback and Jean Wilde (London: Vision, 1956), 88-89.

⁵ Though, as noted above, Heidegger also mentions positive basic attunements on several occasions, as, for instance: joy (*Freude*) in *Being and Time* (358 / 310); joy and, as Marion points out in *Reduction and*

and critical, or as the demon of Socrates could only tell him when something went or was about to go wrong—the verb *stimmen* is widely used in ordinary speech in its positive form to convey accuracy and agreement. One says, *Es stimmt* to confirm the words of one’s interlocutor; and one asks *Stimmt es?* when one seeks such confirmation. Rather than merely technical or deeply psychological or moral, this confirmation is first and foremost epistemological: it means that what is said is true or right, that it corresponds to what is real or has actually happened. Accordingly, Heidegger’s use of the notion of *Stimmung* reveals an important aspect of his theory of truth; namely, that albeit a matter of *aletheia*, or “disclosedness,” it is also a matter of correspondence.⁶ Yet this is not a correspondence of discrete units that can be clearly and distinctly observed, nor is it a correspondence that may be disclosed or discovered. Rather it is the holistic correspondence of harmony and resonance, of what Walter Ong argued is the truth criteria of orality, and what Eric Havelock maintained was the reason poets were expelled from Plato’s republic.⁷

Givenness (173), love (*Liebe*) in “What Is Metaphysics?” (93 / 118); and exultation (*Jubel*) in *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1 / 3).

⁶ Thus in “What Is Philosophy? (75-77), Heidegger defines philosophy as the “correspondence to the being of being” (“*das Entsprechen zum Sein des Seienden*”), and subsequently explains:

Correspondence is necessary and is always attuned, and not just accidentally and occasionally. It is an attunement. And only on the basis of the attunement (*disposition*) does the language of correspondence obtain its precision, its tuning. ... As something tuned and attuned, correspondence really [*wesenhaft*] exists in tuning.

[Das Entsprechen ist notwendig und immer, nicht nur zufällig und bisweilen, ein gestimmtes. Es ist in einer Gestimmtheit. Und erst auf dem Grunde der Gestimmtheit (*disposition*) empfängt das Sagen des Entsprechens seine Präzision, seine Be-stimmtheit. ... Als ge-stimmtes und be-stimmtes ist das Entsprechen *wesenhaft* in einer Stimmung.]

⁷ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologization of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1982]), 71-72. Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982 [1963]). For an interpretation of the relation between *Stimmung* and harmony, see Spitzer “Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony.”

Mood, atmosphere, attunement, and perhaps climate replace the familiar psychological vocabulary of feelings, emotions, passions, affects, and experiences (*Erfahrungen*) to allow a distance from the “ontic” science of psychology and especially from the idea on which this science is premised and which already finds clear articulation in Descartes that such phenomena are primarily a matter of internal experience.⁸ As Heidegger writes (FCM 67 / 100):

It seems as though an attunement is in each case already there, so to speak, like an atmosphere in which we first immerse ourselves in each case and which then attunes us through and through. It does not merely seem so, it is so; and, faced with this fact, we must dismiss the psychology of feelings, experiences, and consciousness.

[Es scheint so, als sei gleichsam je eine Stimmung schon da, wie eine Atmosphäre, in die wir je erst eintauchten und von der wir dann durchstimmt würden. Es sieht nicht nur so aus, als ob es so sei, sondern es ist so, und es gilt, angesichts dieses Tatbestandes die Psychologie der Gefühle und der Erlebnisse und des Bewußtseins zu verabschieden.]

This applies to both anxiety and boredom, as well as to any other mood. As Heidegger further writes, “boredom—and thus ultimately every attunement—is a hybrid, partly objective, partly subjective.” [“Die Langeweile—und so am Ende jede Stimmung—ist ein Zwitterwesen, teils objektiv, teils subjektiv.”] (FCM 88 / 132). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger likewise writes, “[The mood] comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside,’ but arises out of being-in-the-world, as a way of such being.” [“<Die

⁸ Descartes writes in article 26 of *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Robert Stoothoff, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 338:

But we cannot be misled in the same way regarding the passions [i.e., in the way that we can be misled “regarding the perceptions which refer to objects outside us, or even regarding those which refer to certain parts of our body”], in that they [the passions] are so close and internal to our soul that it cannot possibly feel them unless they are truly as it feels them to be. Thus often when we sleep, and sometimes even when we are awake, we imagine certain things so vividly that we think we see them before us, or feel them in our body, although they are not there at all. But even if we are asleep and dreaming, we cannot feel sad, or moved by any other passion, unless the soul truly has this passion within it.

Cf. Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1987), trans. Antos Rancurello, D. B. Terrell, and Linda McAlister (London: Routledge, 1994), 7, 46, 135-36.

Stimmung> kommt weder von ‘Außen’ noch von ‘Innen,’ sondern steigt als Weise des In-der-Welt-seins aus diesem selbst auf.”] (176 / 136). The mood is not “in” one’s consciousness, but nor is it simply in the *unconscious*, because the “being-there and not-being-there of attunement cannot be grasped via the distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness.” [“Das Da-sein und Nicht-Da-sein der Stimmung [sind] nicht faßbar durch die Unterscheidung von Bewußthaben und Unbewußtsein”] (FCM 60 / 91).⁹

Closely related senses of *Stimmung* that Heidegger highlights are “medium” and “presupposition”: “attunements are the ‘presupposition’ for and ‘medium’ of thinking and acting.” [“Die Stimmungen sind die ‘Voraussetzung’ und das ‘Medium’ des Denkens und Handelns.”] (FCM 68 / 102). In doing so, Heidegger brings to light some of the affinities between his *Stimmung* and Kierkegaard’s *Stemning*.¹⁰ For a similar logic is at work in the latter’s assertion, examined in the previous chapter, that “science, just as much as poetry and art, presupposes [*forudsætter*] a mood [*Stemning*] in the creator as well as in the observer” (CA 14 n. / 322 n.), as well as in his suggestion that anxiety is the presupposition (*Forudsætning*) of original sin (CA, ch. 1). Likewise, the notion of mood as medium is to be found in Kierkegaard’s conceptualization of anxiety as the intermediate term or determination (*Mellembestemmelse*) between possibility and

⁹ These are not properly the words of Heidegger but rather the title of a subsection that was added by the editor adequately paraphrasing what Heidegger says in this section specifically regarding the moods (62 / 93), namely that “the distinction between being there and not being there is not equivalent to that between consciousness and unconsciousness.” [“Der Unterschied von Dasein und Nichtdasein deckt sich nicht mit dem von Bewußthaben und Unbewußtsein.”]. On the problem of unconscious affect (especially anxiety) in Freud, see Jerome Wakefield, “Why Emotions Can’t Be Unconscious: An Exploration of Freud’s Essentialism,” *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* 14 (1991), 29-67; and Adrian Johnston, “Affekt, Gefühl, Empfindung: Rereading Freud and the Question of Unconscious Affects,” *Qui Parle* 18, no. 2 (2010), 249-289.

¹⁰ Following nineteenth-century Danish orthography, Kierkegaard capitalizes all nouns, common and proper.

actuality, or between freedom and necessity (CA 49 / 354), a conceptualization through which Kierkegaard explicates his understanding of freedom as “entangled freedom” (*hildet Frihed*; “freedom is not free in itself but entangled, not by necessity, but in itself”), rather than “abstract *liberum arbitrium*” (CA 49 / 355; cf. BT 183 / 144).

But rather than “bridging” or “facilitating” the transition from potentiality to actuality, the notion of mood as medium, in the cases of both Kierkegaard and Heidegger, should be understood as the *overcoming* of this dichotomy. For both Kierkegaard and Heidegger focus on possibilities rather than actualities as determinants of existence and, correspondingly, on passions rather than actions as determinants of freedom. For Kierkegaard, “anxiety *is* freedom’s actuality as the possibility of possibility” [“Angest *er* Frihedens Virkelighed som Mulighed for Muligheden.”] (CA 42 / 348; emphasis added); and for Heidegger, as he argues in *Being and Time*, phenomenological understanding is essentially a matter of grasping possibilities, so that “Higher than actuality stands *possibility*.” [“Höher als die Wirklichkeit steht die *Möglichkeit*.”] (63 / 38). As Heidegger states later in the text, further explicating the significance of possibility as an *existentiale* while making the transition from his analysis of affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) and fear (*Furcht*) to the analysis of the understanding (*Verstehen*):¹¹

¹¹ BT 183 / 143-44:

As a modal category of presence-at-hand, possibility signifies what is *not yet* actual and what is *not at any time* necessary. It characterizes the *merely* possible. Ontologically it is on a lower level than actuality and necessity. On the other hand, possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically. As with existentiality in general, we can, in the first instance, only prepare for the problem of possibility. The phenomenal basis for seeing it at all is provided by the understanding as a disclosive potentiality-for-being.

[Als modale Kategorie der Vorhandenheit bedeutet Möglichkeit das *noch nicht* Wirkliche und das *nicht jemals* Notwendige. Sie charakterisiert das *nur* Mögliche. Sie ist ontologisch niedriger als Wirklichkeit und Notwendigkeit. Die Möglichkeit als Existentzial dagegen ist die ursprünglichste und letzte positive ontologische Bestimmtheit des Daseins; zunächst kann sie wie Existentzialität

Possibility, as an *existentiale*, does not signify a free-floating potentiality-for-being in the sense of the “liberty of indifference” (*libertas indifferentiae*). In every case Dasein, as essentially having a state-of-mind, has already got itself into definite possibilities.

[Die Möglichkeit als Existenzial bedeutet nicht das freischwebende Seinkönnen im Sinne der “Gleichgültigkeit der Willkür” (*libertas indifferentiae*). Das Dasein ist als wesentlich befindliches je schon in bestimmte Möglichkeiten hineingeraten]¹²

In accordance with this reconceptualization of existence and freedom, the human faculties (*Vermögen*) of thinking, willing, and feeling are not “mere” potentialities that may or may not convert into actualities in the form of action and in virtue of some interplay among them (interplay, say, of the Cartesian sort, between the infinite will and the finite reason). The focus on mood, on *Stemning* or *Stimmung*, expresses a philosophical stance that “actualizes” the faculties to eliminate all sharp distinctions between them and do away with the notion that there is any hierarchy between them.¹³

In the Cartesian world, “nothingness possesses no attributes or qualities”¹⁴ because it is a world created *ex nihilo* by the mind of the contemplative soul and in virtue of the

überhaupt lediglich als Problem vorbereitet werden. Den phänomenalen Boden, sie überhaupt zu sehen, bietet das Verstehen als erschließendes Seinkönnen.]

¹² Ibid. Cf. also BT 34 / 13: “Dasein has therefore a third priority as providing the ontico-ontological condition for the possibility of any ontologies.” [“Das Dasein hat daher den dritten Vorrang als ontisch-ontologische Bedingung der Möglichkeit aller Ontologien.”] For a discussion of “the primacy of possibility” in *Being and Time*, see Kiesel, *Genesis*, 439-44.

¹³ Thus in *Being and Time* (178 / 139), Heidegger argues against the philosophical tendency to treat affects and feelings as “psychical phenomena, functioning as a third class of these, usually along with ideation and volition” [“die psychischen Phänomene, als deren dritte Klasse sie meist neben Vorstellen und Wollen fungieren”]. Compare also with *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 65 / 98, where Heidegger takes issue with the “traditional” view that, “Alongside thinking and willing, feeling is a third class of experience” [“Das Fühlen ist neben Denken und Wollen die dritte Klasse der Erlebnisse”], contending that: “This classification of experiences is carried out on the basis of the conception of man as a rational living being.” [“Diese Klassifizierung der Erlebnisse ist unter Zugrundelegung der Auffassung des Menschen als eines vernünftigen Lebewesens durchgeführt.”]

¹⁴ René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Part One, article 11, p. 196. Considering this idea “very well known by the natural light” (ibid.), Descartes mentions it once again in article 52 (p. 210) to support his statement that, “we cannot initially become aware of a substance merely through its being an existing thing, since this alone does not of itself have any effect on us [quia hoc solum per se nos non afficit].” In *History of the Concept of Time* (175-76 / 236-37), Heidegger considers this statement equivalent to Kant’s contention that being is not a real predicate highlighting the “concept of

faculty of reason alone to serve as a foundation for subject-based thinking, which, deprived of volition and imagination, precludes the question “Why there is something rather than nothing?”¹⁵ “Nothing” designates the limit of the intelligible for the isolated reason of the Cartesian subject. But for Kierkegaard’s individual and Heidegger’s *Dasein*, on the other hand, the faculty of thinking is not a sufficient existential determination,¹⁶ and no other faculty in isolation, nor even all of them in concert, can be regarded as such, since human existence is discovered in its freedom *towards* its possibilities rather than in its actualization of predetermined possibilities or in its exercise, whether free, automatic, or compulsive, of some given set of capacities.¹⁷

affection” (*Begriff der Affektion*) that is implied in this view. Thus according to Heidegger, both Descartes and Kant are committed to the principle “that being for itself cannot be experienced by us in the entity because it does not affect us” [“daß das Sein für sich am Seienden für uns nicht erfahrbar sei, weil es uns nicht affiziert”]. In opposition to this view, Heidegger writes: “There is indeed an entity which can be grasped directly and *only* primarily from its *being* and, if it is to be understood philosophically, must so be grasped.” [“Es Gibt sehr wohl ein Seiendes, das gerade und *nur* primär von seinem *Sein* aus gefaßt werden kann und—wenn es philosophisch verstanden sein will—gefaßt werden muß.”] But only later in the text (291 / 403), where he presents his concept of anxiety and uncanniness, does Heidegger specify that the affection that is, in effect, denied by Descartes and (more implicitly) by Kant is anxiety, which is the “affection of being as such” [“Affektion vom Sein als solchen”]: “But there is such an affection (if one wants to use this mode of expression). Dread [*Angst*] is nothing other than the pure and simple experience of being in the sense of being-in-the-world.” [“Es gibt diese Affektion vom Sein als solchem, (wenn man dies Ausdrucksweise gebrauchen will). Die Angst ist nichts anderes als die schlechthinnige Erfahrung des Seins im Sinne des In-der-Welt-seins.”] Citations of the Latin text of *Principles of Philosophy* are from *Oeuvres de Descartes* vol. VIII, eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Cerf, 1905), 25.

¹⁵ Or in Heidegger’s words, “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?” [“Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?”] Heidegger poses this question in precisely the same formulation at the very end of “What Is Metaphysics” (96 / 122) and right at the outset of *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1/ 1). Rendered here according to Fried and Polt’s translation of the latter text.

¹⁶ BT 367 / 321: “The ‘I’ is not just an ‘I think,’ but an ‘I think something.’” [“Das Ich ist nicht nur ‘Ich denke’ sondern ‘Ich denke etwas.’”], that is, all experience is intentional, or object related. Cf. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 68.

¹⁷ Following a similar logic, Heidegger says in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* that the organism cannot be conceived of as a “bundle of drives” (Bündel von Trieben) or a “bundle of capacities” (Bündel von Fähigkeiten), for it is rather the capacities themselves that make the organism what it is (234-36 / 341-44); likewise, man does not “have” a resolution (*Entschlossenheit*), but rather it is the resolution itself that “has” (*hat*) him (295 / 427); and only inasmuch as, in the ground of the essence of *Dasein*, there lies the constant possibility (*ständige Möglichkeit*) of “it is boring for one” can one be bored with things, people, and oneself (156-57 / 235-36).

Thus in *Being and Time* (174 / 135), Heidegger considers the moods in terms of facts rather than in terms of human potential.¹⁸ Moods, which in Heidegger's existential analytic are translated into Dasein's structural characteristic of "affectedness" (*Befindlichkeit*), disclose Dasein in its "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*), which, in turn, is Dasein's "facticity" (*Faktizität*). Under this class of facts, we subsequently find other notions that can be subsumed under the traditional category of faculties, such as understanding (*Verstehen*) and discourse (*Rede*). That which enables Heidegger to utilize these notions in a unified structure and without reintroducing distinctions and hierarchy between the faculties is the peculiar phenomenon of "equiprimordiality" (*Gleichursprünglichkeit*; 170 / 131)—which, as he claims, has largely been overlooked. Regarding this phenomenon, Heidegger makes the observation that understanding and affectedness are the two "equiprimordial. . . constitutive ways of being the 'there'" ["Die beiden gleichursprünglichen konstitutiven Weisen, das Da zu sein"], so that, as he further explains later in the text, "Affectedness always has its understanding. . . Understanding always has its mood." ["Befindlichkeit hat je ihr Verständnis. . . Verstehen ist immer gestimmtes"]; and both "affectedness and understanding are determined equiprimordially by discourse." ["Befindlichkeit und Verstehen sind gleichursprünglich bestimmt durch die Rede."]¹⁹ The theoretical function of moods as media, to sum up this point, is to

¹⁸ This is of course not to say that the moods are "given" as facts (cf. FCM 64-65 / 97) but only that *we* are given to ourselves as always already in a certain mood.

¹⁹ 170-73 / 131-33, 182 / 142; trans. modified; emphasis on *Rede* removed. In a similar way, Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's theory of the faculties concentrates on their "original unity" (*Wesenseinheit*), that is on how the faculty of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) intermediates between the faculties of sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*)—defined by Kant as: "The capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects"—and understanding (*Verstand*), so as to (in Kant's words) "bring into combination the manifold of intuition on the one side and the condition of the necessary unity of apperception on the other." Heidegger, *Kant*, 39ff. / 35ff., 61 / 58. Citations of Kant are from *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), A19/B33, p. 155, A 124, p. 241. See Gordon, *Continental Divide*, 362-63.

abolish the classical distinction between feeling, knowing, and willing, as well as the more general distinction, under which these concepts operate, between the realms of possibility (will) and actuality (action).

(b) The Direction of Becoming More Profound (*Richtung des Tieferwerdens*):

Mood (*Stimmung*), Determination (*Bestimmung*), and Affectedness

(*Befindlichkeit*)

In addition to the various senses of *Stimmung*, it is important for Heidegger to highlight the formal resemblance of *Stimmung* (mood) and *Be-stimmung* (determination).²⁰ Heidegger insists that his concern with the moods does not stem from a psychological interest in observing and describing the dynamics of the human soul or in developing taxonomies of the affects. Indeed, on the face of it, it seems that his treatment of the emotions is quite different from those of Descartes, Spinoza, Darwin, or Silvan Tomkins, all of whom studied the emotions by listing the various forms of their mental expression or bodily manifestation. Rather, the important thing for Heidegger is strictly the ontological significance of the emotions: how being itself is determined (*bestimmt*) through the moods, through this evasive quality which is neither objective nor subjective and “comes neither from within nor from without.”

²⁰ This motif also stands at the center of Heidegger’s lecture “What Is Philosophy?” It can be found, for instance, in Heidegger’s interpretation of what Plato has Socrates say to Theaetetus in *Theaetetus*, 115d: “For this feeling [*pathos*] of wonder [*thaumazein*] shows that you are a philosopher, since wonder is the only beginning [*arkhē*] of philosophy.” Suggesting that *pathos* be translated as *Stimmung*, Heidegger clarifies that he thereby means both “Ge-stimmtheit und Be-stimmtheit” (translated in this case as “disposition and determination”). See (for original and translation) Heidegger, “What Is Metaphysics?,” 82-83. As noted above, in another pertinent passage from this lecture (76-77; trans. modified), Heidegger says: “As something tuned and attuned, correspondence essentially exists in tuning” [“Als ge-stimmtes und be-stimmtes is das Entsprechen wesentlich in einer Stimmung.”]. Citations of Plato are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 12, trans. Harold Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 55.

This concern stems directly from the core of Heidegger's argument regarding the need to problematize the "thesis of medieval ontology. . . which goes back to Aristotle," and according to which: "To the constitution of the being of a being there belongs (a) whatness, essence (Was-sein, *essentia*), and (b) existence or extantness (*existentia*, *Vorhandensein*)." ["Zur Seinsverfassung eines Seienden gehören das Was-sein (*essentia*) und das *Vorhandensein* (*existentia*)."]²¹ Underlying this medieval thesis, according to Heidegger, is a logic of determination that implies that existence can be conceived of as completely undetermined, that is, as a formless and undifferentiated *subjectum* that becomes meaningful only in virtue of some determining factor that comes, as it were, from without existence so as to define its essence—as if essences (in the sense of *genera*) may or may not be instantiated as existing things and yet remain *indifferent* in the face of this possibility, or as if this possibility were inessential to being. Since the essence of Dasein "lies in its existence" (BT 67 / 42), the idea of being as *Vorhandensein*, of essence-less subjectivity (a "worldless," isolated, empty, ontologically undetermined *Einfaches*; BT 366 / 318), is inadequate from an ontological viewpoint.²² Being, in short, is always already determined and differentiated. Hence, "the conception of man as consciousness, as subject, as person, as a rational being, and our *concept* of each of these:

²¹ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems*, 15 / 20. For a succinct discussion of this theme, see Robert Bernasconi, "Repetition and Tradition: Heidegger's Destruction of the Distinction Between [*sic*] Essence and Existence in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*," in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, eds. Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 128-136. Cf. BT 67 / 42. Heidegger clarifies the relevant passage from *Being and Time* in his 1946 "Letter on 'Humanism,'" 325ff. / 247ff.

²² Heidegger sometimes appears to employ the term *Vorhandenheit* in quite a different sense, for instance, when in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* he conceives of this way of relating to the world as that which distinguishes man from the animal (248 / 360), while the claim in *Being and Time* is that "being-present-at-hand" is "a kind of being which is essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein's character." ["*Vorhandensein*... <ist> eine Seinsart, die dem Seienden vom Charakter des Daseins wesensmäßig nicht zukommt."] (67 / 42). But there is no contradiction: on the one hand, Dasein is not a being of the kind that is merely present at hand, and yet, on the other hand, relating to things as merely present at hand is an essential characteristic of the kind of being that the human being is.

of consciousness, subject, I, and person, must be put in question.” [“die Auffassung des Menschen als Bewußtsein, als Subjekt, als Person, als Vernunftwesen und der *Begriff* von all dem: von Bewußtsein, Subjekt, Ich, Person in Frage gestellt werden muß.”] (FCM 133 / 201). On such grounds, Heidegger attacks not only Descartes’ concept of the I (ibid.), but also Kant’s, which for Heidegger, is “isolated” (*isoliert*) and “ontologically undetermined” (*ontologisch unbestimmt*; BT 367-68 / 321; trans. modified). In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger criticizes both Kant and Hegel along similar lines, claiming that their philosophies lead to the “isolation” of the subject and that they nevertheless do not account for the problem of human finitude (208-9 / 305-6).²³

Heidegger’s conviction that being as such must be determined is why he examines that which seems completely undetermined (*unbestimmt*)—empty, insignificant, or devoid of meaning. As he explains in *History of the Concept of Time* (143-44 / 193-94), the question of being is essentially a “question of determination” (*Bestimmungsfrage*; or as Kisiel has it, a “question of definition”). It is not a question as to whether there is being or not, but a question about the sense in which being lends itself to be understood precisely when it appears completely undetermined. It is important to stress, however, that the focus on the absence or on the privative is not merely a methodological maneuver, a *via negativa* or heuristic device designed to make the non-absent visible, since for Heidegger that which is ontically privative appears ontologically as a positive phenomenon. Truth itself is essentially *Entdecktheit*—“discoveredness,” rather than some sort of a “thing” that may or may not be discovered—and *Dasein*, correspondingly, *is* its

²³ Compare with Heidegger’s presentation of his notion of individuation (*Vereinzelung*) as not implying “isolation” (*Isolierung*) in the 1928/29 lecture course *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, GA 27: 334.

Erschlossenheit (disclosedness; BT 171 / 133).²⁴ Focusing on the privative, Heidegger lets the necessary features of existence “arise” in the process of his analysis; he “lays bare” these features by letting them reveal themselves. In this way, he discovers in *Being and Time* that being is always already determined (*bestimmt*) in the following familiar ways: Being is always already mine (*Jemeinigkeit*), it is always the kind of being whose being is an issue for it (this is the “*es geht um. . .*” of being), it always has a here and a there (*da*), it is always in-the-world. it always has a for-the-sake-of-which (*Worumwillen*), and it is always already somehow attuned (*gestimmt*).

The systematic removal of observable determinations—whether philosophical, social, physiological, psychological, biological, anthropological, or theological—in order to unveil the deeper characteristics of being, those that stem directly from sheer existence, is an objective that guides the investigation both in *Being and Time* and in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger frequently describes this procedure as a movement in “the direction of becoming more profound” (“*die Richtung des Tieferwerdens*”; 108 / 163, 113 / 171, 128 / 194, 133 / 200). This movement of deepening leads us in the lecture course from the shallower forms of boredom to its most profound form: the Grund-*stimmung* of *die tiefe Langeweile*. It leads us from “being bored by something” (*Gelangweiltwerden von etwas*), through “being bored with something” (*Sichlangweilen bei etwas*), to the lexeme “boredom” in the sense in which it occurs in the sentence “it is boring for one” (*es ist einem langweilig*). Heidegger sums up the difference between the first two forms of boredom as follows: “in the first form we have a *determinate boring thing*, while in the

²⁴ As Heidegger rhetorically asks (BT 265 / 222), “Is it accidental that when the Greeks express themselves as to the essence of truth, they use the *privative* expression—ἀ-λήθεια?” [“*Ist es Zufall, daß die Griechen sich über das Wesen der Wahrheit in einem privativen Ausdruck (ἀ-λήθεια) aussprechen?*”]

second form we have *something indeterminate that bores us*.” [“In der ersten Form haben wir ein *bestimmtes Langweiliges*, in der zweiten Form ein *unbestimmtes Langweilendes*.”] (114 / 173). In other words, in the first form of boredom there are definable or determinable objects by which one is bored in the boring situation while in the second form one is bored in a certain situation but without knowing what exactly bores one. The second form of boredom, Heidegger thus says, has the character of “*I know not what*” [“*ich weiß nicht was*”] (114 / 172; cf. BT 231 / 186). As the analysis proceeds, the object of boredom becomes less distinct and the form of boredom more profound and originary. In line with this, the main difference between the two shallower forms of boredom and the third and most profound form of boredom is the total removal of the “*etwas*,” which signifies the determination of the mood in relation to a certain situation or object in one’s surroundings.

Complementary to this removal of *objective* determinations is the removal of *subjective* determinations. In the first form of boredom, there is a determined subject, or, to use the terminology of *Being and Time*, a being in the world of equipment (a person waiting for a train). In the second form, the determination of the subject is primarily social: a being with others (a person returning home after a dinner party). In the third form of boredom, there are neither objective nor subjective determinations. This is why Heidegger refrains from coming up with a scenario that would exemplify the third form of boredom.²⁵ The absence of determinations in the third form of boredom is designated

²⁵Aside from “to walk through the streets of a large city on a Sunday afternoon.” [“es ist einem langweilig’, wenn man an einem Sonntagnachmittag durch die Straßen einer Großstadt geht.”] (FCM 135 / 204), which is a telling example given the resemblance to Baudelaire’s (and Benjamin’s) *flâneur*, Simmel’s urbanite with the “blasé attitude,” and Nietzsche’s “old God,” who “takes a pleasure stroll in his garden: except that he is bored.” [“Der alte Gott... lustwandelt in seinem Garten: nur dass er sich langweilt”; *Ecce Homo*, 152 / 48]. However, Heidegger only mentions this example very briefly and does not elaborate on it, as he does with regards to the examples of the first two forms of boredom.

by the *es* (it) and *einem* (one) of “es ist einem langweilig” (“it is boring for one”): “It—for one—not for me as me, not for you as you, not for us as us, but for one. Name, standing, vocation, role, age and fate as mine and yours disappear.” [“Es—das ist der Titel für das Unbestimmte, Unbekannte... Es—einem—nicht mir als mir, nicht dir als dir, nicht uns als uns, sondern einem. Name, Stand, Beruf, Rolle, Alter und Geschick als das Meinige und Deinige fällt von uns ab.”] (134-35 / 203).

To sum up this point, profound boredom, the fundamental mood which is key to the understanding of time, is discovered through the removal of determinations. It is boredom without a boredom-inflicting object and without a subject that gets bored due to the particular social role that the subject has to play. And it is from within this indeterminacy that the “fundamental concepts of metaphysics” are to be explored.

This movement of becoming more profound through the removal of determinations also appears at the different levels of the inquiry in *Being and Time*. In principle, it can be regarded as an aspect of the phenomenological method that Heidegger tells us that he employs in this book. For this method is that which leads him to take the dimension of “average everydayness” (*durchschnittliche Alltäglichkeit*) as point of departure and examine, first of all, the way that being is determined “proximally and for the most part” (*zunächst und zumeist*), i.e., the realm of the taken-for-granted and the self-evident, in which existential phenomena present themselves only superficially (37-38 / 16, 50 / 28). In order to situate the concept of *Befindlichkeit* (affectedness) and the *Grundbefindlichkeit* (basic affectedness) of anxiety within the larger project of *Being and Time*, I shall now describe how this movement determines the course of Heidegger’s inquiry in Chapters 2 through 5 of the first division of *Being and Time* (§§14-44), the first

three of which deal with aspects of being-in-the-world and the latter with “being-in as such” (*das In-Sein als solches*).

(c) Between Indifference and Boredom

Heidegger initially presents the famous articulated (*gegliedert*) expression “being-in-the-world” (*In-der-Welt-sein*) in the first division of *Being and Time* as means for an “orientation towards being-in as such” [“Orientierung am In-Sein als solchem”] (78 / 52; italics omitted). When we are asked, “What is meant by ‘Being-in?’” [“Was besagt *In-Sein*?”], “our proximal reaction is to round out this expression to ‘being-in’ ‘in the world’” [“Den Ausdruck ergänzen wir zunächst zu In-Sein ‘in der Welt’”] (79 / 53). This point of departure, set in Chapter 2, leads us to the discussion about the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand (*Vorhandenheit* and *Zuhandenheit*) in Chapter 3, and then, in Chapter 4, to the discussion about the question as to the “who” of Dasein (*das Wer des Daseins*) and about the characteristics of the “Dasein-with of others” and “everyday being-with” (*das Mitdasein der Anderen und das alltägliche Mitsein*). Only then do we arrive at the point of the investigation in which we can analyze being-in as such, i.e., in Chapter 5. This is where Heidegger presents his conceptualization of moods, introducing to this end the notion of *Befindlichkeit*.

Let us roughly outline the movement of the reasoning that organizes these chapters. It begins with the observation that Dasein is always surrounded by objects and equipment, constituting what Heidegger calls “that which is encountered in the world” (*das innerweltlich Begegnende*). This is what “being-in-the-world” essentially means; and it is not a mere delusion, but a fundamental state of Dasein (77 / 52). Yet all these “entities” that populate one’s world, even if conceived of in their totality, do not constitute what

“being” means. As we ultimately learn, even in their structural totality (the totality of references, equipment, involvements, spaces, and words; *Verweisungs-, Zeug-, Bewandtnis-, Platz-, and Wortganzheit*), they do not determine being as such, that is, the totality of the structural totality of Dasein (*Ganzheit des Strukturganzen des Daseins*), for the “being-in” (*In-sein*) of Dasein is not a “being-in-something” (*Sein in...*) as the “being-present-at-hand-together of things” (*Beisammen-vorhanden-sein von vorkommenden Dingen*; 79-81 / 53-55). Thus, Heidegger gradually “removes” these superficial existential layers explaining why the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand, even though they furnish the world of being-in-the-world, do not qualify as ultimate determinants of the kind of being which is in question in the investigation.

The next step of the investigation consists in dissolving the social determinations of existence—the understanding of the “who of Dasein” in terms of *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein*. Dasein is not only surrounded by all sorts of objects and equipment, but also by people. Although Dasein is always already mine, “being alone” is nothing but “a deficient mode of being-with” [“Das Alleinsein ist ein defizienter Modus des Mitseins”] (157 / 120).²⁶ Here again we are guided by a similar logic: although Dasein, as being-in-the-world, is always already with others (*ibid.*, 162 / 125), this “being with others” does not determine existence as such, or, which amounts to the same thing, existence in its totality. Considering the different flattening or “leveling” (*Einebnung*) effects of (modern) society, Heidegger suggests the following answer to the question about the “who” of Dasein: “The ‘who’ is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the

²⁶ Cf. FCM 205 / 301: “Insofar as human beings exist at all, they already find themselves transposed [*versetzt*] in their existence into other human beings, even if there are factually no other human beings in the vicinity.” [“Sofern ein Mensch existiert, ist er als existierender schon in andere Menschen versetzt, auch dann, wenn faktisch keine anderen Menschen in der Nähe sind.”]

sum of them all. The ‘who’ is the neuter, *the ‘they.’*” [“Das Wer ist nicht dieser und nicht jener, nicht man selbst und nicht einige und nicht die Summe Aller. Das ‘Wer’ is das Neutrum, *das Man.*”] (164 / 126).²⁷ This *das Man*, often translated as either “the one” or the “they,” is not simply a “man without qualities” in the sense of a person who is deprived of or resistant to social determinations; but rather, *das Man* is ontologically underdetermined or underdetermined precisely because it is otherwise overdetermined, that is, equally and redundantly determined by both the will of the individual and the will of the public, rendering the being of both these “scales” of existence practically meaningless. It is neither the “one” nor the “they” but the *conflation* of them. Now the crucial point is that in view of the fact that this *das Man*, which is presented as the answer to the question as the “who” of being-in-the-world, is not where the investigation culminates—as one could have expected, and as is indeed the case as we have seen in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*—one may observe that insofar as the analysis indeed proceeds in the direction of becoming more profound, this movement is almost inextricably associated with another movement: the to-and-from movement between authenticity and inauthenticity. Only in virtue of the fact that *das Man* is conceptualized in diametrical opposition to the authentic mode of being does it have the capacity to lay

²⁷ Heidegger apparently draws in his elaboration of the notion of *das Man* on Kierkegaard’s discussion of “the leveling process” in *The Present Age*. Contrasting the leveling process at its most advanced state with “rebellion” at “its most violent” stage, Kierkegaard writes:

At its maximum the levelling process is a deathly silence in which one can hear one’s heart beat, a silence which nothing can pierce, in which everything is engulfed, powerless to resist. One man can be at the head of a rebellion, but no one can be at the head of the levelling process alone, for in that case he would be the leader and would thus escape being leveled. Each individual within his own little circle can co-operate in the levelling, but it is an abstract power, and the levelling process is the victory of abstraction over the individual. The levelling process in modern times, corresponds, in reflection, to fate in antiquity.

Søren Kierkegaard, *The Present Age*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 51-52. For a discussion, see Harrison Hall, “Love and Death: Kierkegaard and Heidegger on Authentic and Inauthentic Human Existence,” *Inquiry* 27, no. 1-4 (1984), 179-97.

bare the void at the depth of Dasein's being as being-with-others-in-the-world and lead us to the next step of the investigation, the analysis of being-in as such. This analysis tellingly begins with the discussion of moods and affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*).²⁸

The analysis of *Befindlichkeit* follows the familiar logic of becoming more profound: after the removal of Dasein's material determinations (being-in-the-world) and social determinations (being-with), Heidegger focuses on Dasein's psychological determinations (being-in as such).²⁹ The goal of his conceptualization of *Befindlichkeit* is to work out the structural characteristic of Dasein that is designated by its very name: the fact that it always has a *da*, at once a here and a there. We are told that, "as a naked 'that it is and has to be'" ("als nacktes 'Daß est ist und zu sein hat'"; 173 / 134), Dasein is revealed by *Befindlichkeit* in its *Geworfenheit*, that is, in its "thrownness." Thrownness, in turn, designates "the facticity of being delivered over" ("*die Faktizität der Überantwortung*"; 174 / 135); and facticity, to complete the hermeneutic loop, points to the phenomenon of Dasein's "being-already-in." (This is the *Schon-sein-in* of facticity, which is the conceptual counterpart of the *Sich-vorweg* of existence and of the *Sein bei* of falling; 293 / 249-50). But whence does *Befindlichkeit* draw this revealing capacity? How does it lay bare these structural characteristics of Dasein?

Ontically and more familiarly, *Befindlichkeit* is simply *Stimmung* or *Gestimmtsein*, attunement or being attuned. As we have just seen, however, in his invocation of a notion that appears to belong to the realm of the affects, Heidegger is not concerned with the psychology of the affects, the study of the typology of affective states, or the normative

²⁸ As Heidegger says in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (57 / 87), actual living philosophizing (*ein wirklich lebendiges Philosophieren*) begins with a basic mood.

²⁹ Heidegger would of course resist such ontic designations. My intention is not to force them on his analysis but only to use them as a heuristic device.

assessment of human affectedness, but with the ontological implications of *Befindlichkeit* as a “fundamental *existentiale*.” Hence, what is under consideration here is not the vivid variety of moods that color the human experience,³⁰ but the very fact that one is always already somehow attuned to a certain mood, or to use Heidegger’s words, “that Dasein is always already attuned” [“daß das Dasein je schon immer gestimmt ist”] (173 / 134).

This can be demonstrated through the examination of *privative* states of mind rather than positive mental conditions. Clarifying the notion of *Stimmung*, therefore, Heidegger primarily mentions equanimity (*Gleichmut*) and “inhibited frustration” (*gehemmte Mißmut*) as states of mind that, although manifesting emotional aloofness or withdrawal, ontologically attest to the fundamental inevitability of being submerged in a certain mood, of being in every case already somehow entirely attuned. Even “the pallid lack of mood” is in essence a mood: “The pallid, evenly balanced lack of mood, which is often persistent and which is not to be mistaken for bad mood, is far from nothing at all.” [“Die oft anhaltende, ebenmäßige und fahle Ungestimmtheit, ist so wenig nichts, daß gerade in ihr das Dasein ihm selbst überdrüssig wird.”] (ibid.). As we have also noted, it is important for Heidegger to draw parallels between *Unbestimmtheit* (undetermination, indeterminacy, indefiniteness) on the one hand, and *Ungestimmtheit* (lack of mood, being un-attuned) on the other. The rejection of the distinction between existence and essence leads Heidegger to examine precisely that which appears *unbestimmt*, and he focuses in his analysis of *Befindlichkeit* on the seemingly neutral, undetermined states of mind: *Ungestimmtheit* (lack of mood), *Gleichgültigkeit* (indifference), *Gleichmut* (equanimity), and *Indifferenz*.

³⁰ Ontically, Heidegger says later in the text (390 / 340), moods are well known to us as “fleeting Experiences which ‘colour’ one’s whole ‘psychical condition.’” [“flüchtige Erlebnisse, die das Ganze des ‘Seelenzustandes’ ‘färben.’”]

It appears that we are now already fully situated in the semantic field of boredom. For boredom seems to be exactly the mood of “not being in a mood,” of being indifferent. The “pallid lack of mood,” as Heidegger describes it in the second division, is the mood that “dominates the ‘grey everyday’ through and through” (“den ‘grauen Alltag’ durchherrscht”; 395 / 345). It is the “mood of complete indifference, which is addicted to nothing and has no urge for anything, and which abandons itself to whatever the day may bring” [“Die fahle Ungestimmtheit der Gleichgültigkeit vollends, die an nichts hängt und zu nichts drängt und sich dem überläßt, was je der Tag bringt”] (396 / 345; trans. modified). In fact, already at the outset of the first division of *Being and Time*, titled, to remind us, “Preparatory Fundamental Analysis of Dasein” (“*Die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins*”), we encounter this “undifferentiated character of Dasein’s everydayness,” which, as we are told there, “is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity.” [“Die Indifferenz der Alltäglichkeit des Daseins ist nicht nichts, sondern ein positiver phänomenaler Charakter dieses Seienden.”] (69 / 43). Heidegger then informs us: “We call this everyday undifferentiated character of Dasein ‘*averageness*.’” [“Wir nennen diese alltägliche Indifferenz des Daseins *Durchschnittlichkeit*.”] (69 / 43). So that already at this point, upon learning that the preparatory analysis is in fact an analysis of average everydayness, it is clear that the experience of boredom must be of special significance in this text. But Heidegger never mentions the word *Langeweile*, neither in the preparatory analysis nor in the rest of the published text. This avoidance, we can now see, is first rendered noticeable in the analysis of *Befindlichkeit*, where Heidegger systematically describes the affective aspects of average everydayness utilizing, as always, a rich and partly innovative vocabulary to

this end, while carefully refraining from mentioning the lexeme *Langeweile* in any of its variations or forms.

In consideration of Heidegger's morphological concerns, we can now see that unlike *Ungestimmtheit*, *Gleichgültigkeit*, *Gleichmut*, and *Indifferenz*, in the form *Langeweile* there is no mark of negativity, equality, or neutrality. *Langeweile* is not a kind of not-feeling but a kind of feeling. In other words, *Langeweile* is a passion. (Even Jesus, Pascal tells us, suffered from boredom.³¹) In its linguistic form, it designates an emotional determination rather than the *privation* of affectedness or the condition of being emotionally undetermined. Thus while *Ungestimmtheit*, in its resemblance to *Unbestimmtheit*, stresses the equiprimordiality of the impossibility of being emotionally and ontologically undetermined, and while *Gleichgültigkeit* likewise designates, throughout *Being and Time* and in an interchangeable manner, both emotional and ontological *non*-determinations,³² *Langeweile*, despite its semantic proximity to indifference, bears the mark of determination in its very form. *Langeweile* does not occur in *Being and Time* because it would have diverted us from our ontological expeditions in the realms of indeterminacy.

My intention here is not to deny or downplay the significance of indifference in the phenomenon of boredom. Heidegger himself makes ample use of the notion of indifference (*Gleichgültigkeit*) throughout his analysis of boredom, especially in the case

³¹ Describing the sufferings of Christ, Pascal writes: "Jesus finds himself in boredom." ["Jésus dans l'ennui."] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 749, p. 558. Translation is according to Carlson's suggestion in Marion, *Reduction and Givenness*, 190.

³² Thus as regards the being which is merely present-at-hand, Heidegger says: "To entities such as these, their being is 'a matter of indifference'; or more precisely, they 'are' such that their being can be neither a matter of indifference to them, nor the opposite." ["Diesem Seienden ist sein Sein 'gleichgültig,' genau besehen, es 'ist' so, daß ihm sein Sein weder gleichgültig noch ungleichgültig sein kann."] (BT 68 / 42; see also 288 / 243). This implies that even being indifferent (*gleichgültig*)—ontologically as well as emotionally—is an existential determination, but unlike *Langeweile*, *Gleichgültigkeit* is indicated nonetheless only in the form of its impossibility.

of profound boredom, in which “beings as a whole” (*das Seiende im Ganzen*) become suddenly indifferent.³³ Even the brief remark about boredom in “What Is Metaphysics?” (87 / 110) contains a reference to indifference.³⁴ It is therefore not surprising that commentators have also emphasized the relation between boredom and indifference.³⁵ But as we have seen in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, there is apparently no difference in this regard between Heidegger’s concepts of boredom and anxiety. Anxiety is also explicitly worked out in terms of indifference.³⁶ Yet there is an important difference between boredom and anxiety: however closely related to indifference, anxiety *itself* is not indifference; in the case of boredom, there is a tendency to overlook this crucial difference.

The fact that, though primarily interested in cases of lack of attunement, Heidegger refrains from using the word *Langeweile* in his analysis of *Befindlichkeit* in *Being and Time* suggests that he is aware of this difference and takes it into account. This impression is strengthened by Heidegger’s explanation of the first form of boredom in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (86-87 / 130), where he notes that when we

³³ 138 / 207-8: “each and every thing at once becomes indifferent, each and every thing moves together at one and the same time into an indifference.” [“mit einem Schlag wird alles und jedes gleichgültig, alles und jedes rückt in einem zumal in eine Gleichgültigkeit zusammen.”]—and yet: “Beings as a whole do not disappear... but *show themselves precisely as such* in their indifference.” [“Das Seiende im Ganzen verschwindet aber nicht, sondern *zeigt sich gerade als solches* in seiner Gleichgültigkeit.”]

³⁴ “Profound boredom, drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things and human beings and oneself along with them into a remarkable indifference.” [“Die Tiefe Langeweile, in den Abgründen des Daseins wie schweigender Nebel hin- und herziehend, rückt alle Dinge, Menschen und einen selbst mit ihnen in eine merkwürdige gleichgültigkeit zusammen.”]

³⁵ See for instance Michel Haar, “Empty Time and Indifference to Being,” trans. Douglas Brick in *Heidegger toward the Turn: Essays on the Work of the 1930s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 295-317. Likewise in his reading of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, van Dijk focuses on that which is formally indicated by the indifference of beings as a whole. See van Dijk, “Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik,” 89-109. See also Mulhall, *Philosophical Myths*, 80-82.

³⁶ For instance, describing anxiety in “What Is Metaphysics?” (88 / 111), Heidegger writes: “All things and we ourselves sink into indifference.” [“Alle Dinge und wir selbst versinken in eine Gleichgültigkeit.”]

are bored by a boring book, we are not indifferent (*gleichgültig*) to it.³⁷ But this does not prove that the difference between boredom and indifference, lack of attunement, or undetermination, is always so clear in Heidegger's writing. An important counterexample can be found in the 1934/35 lecture course on Hölderlin's poetry, where Heidegger reiterates the principles of his phenomenology of moods in a manner similar to their presentation in the opening of his exposition of *Befindlichkeit* in §29 of *Being and Time*. Regarding the impossibility of being unattuned and undetermined (*ungestimmt* and *unbestimmt*), Heidegger does mention *Langeweile* (or more precisely "*die Urform der Langeweile*," "the primordial form of boredom"), and he identifies it precisely with "lack of attunement" (*Ungestimmtheit*).³⁸ But this only attests to the close semantic proximity of indifference and boredom. It does not invalidate the notion that they are different in kind. Moreover, Heidegger had another reason to refrain from mentioning *Langeweile* in his exposition of *Befindlichkeit* in *Being and Time*, which does not apply to the lecture course on Hölderlin and which may well be the only reason of which Heidegger was aware in this regard.

³⁷ "For if something is wearisome and tedious, then this entails that it has not left us completely indifferent, but on the contrary: we are present while reading, given over to it, but not taken by it." ["Denn wenn etwas schleppend und öde ist, dann liegt darin, daß es uns nicht völlig gleichgültig gelassen hat, sondern umgekehrt: wir sind im Lesen dabei, hingegeben, aber nicht hingenommen."]

³⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymns „Germania“ and „The Rhine“* (1934/35), trans. William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 125; *Hölderlin's Hymns „Germanien“ und „Der Rhein“*, GA 39, 1999 [1980], 142:

Human Dasein is indeed always attuned, if only in the manner of a bad or disgruntled mood, or in the peculiar manner of that mood that is familiar to us as the dull, vacuous, and dreary lack of attunement, familiar to us in the everyday realm as that which we express in the statement "I'm not up to anything"—the primordial form of boredom, which for its part can unfold into a fundamental attunement.

[Zwar ist das menschliche Dasein immer gestimmt, sei es auch nur in der Weise einer Mißstimmung oder Verstimmung, oder sei es in jener eigentümlichen Weise der Stimmung, die wir als das Fade und Leere und Trockene der Ungestimmtheit kennen, im Alltag bekannt als jenes, das wir aussprechen in der Rede: ich bin zu nichts aufgelegt—die Urform der Langeweile, die ihrerseits bis zu einer Grundstimmung sich entfalten kann.]

**(d) The Suspension of Temporality in *Being and Time* and the Ensuing
Authentic-Inauthentic Oscillation**

It is not only the fact but also the specific way in which *Langeweile* is marked and determined that explains why boredom is not found in the analysis of *Befindlichkeit* and, consequently, in the rest of the extant text of *Being and Time*. In form and meaning, *Langeweile* is so intimately related to temporality that it is impossible to consider it as a mode of *Befindlichkeit* in the first division of *Being and Time*. The first division, as its title announces, is dedicated to the “preparatory” stage of Heidegger’s investigation (*die vorbereitende Analyse des Daseins*), from which, in compliance with the order of demonstration of the book, explicit considerations of temporality are systematically excluded.³⁹ If *Langeweile* were to appear there, it would have had to be considered regardless of its temporal sense, and this is impossible, at least for Heidegger. It is only in the second division, where Heidegger presents the interpretation which “repeats” (*wiederholt*) the preparatory analysis, that temporality is finally “designated” (*aufgewiesen*; 38 / 17; trans. modified) as the meaning of the being of Dasein, but, by

³⁹ As Heidegger explains in the introduction (38 / 17), the “preparatory procedure” is a means whereby

the horizon for the most primordial way of interpreting being may be laid bare. Once we have arrived at that horizon, this preparatory analytic of Dasein will have to be repeated on a higher and authentically ontological basis. ... We shall point to *temporality* as the meaning of the being of that entity which we call “Dasein.” If this is to be demonstrated, those structures of Dasein which we shall provisionally exhibit must be interpreted over again as modes of temporality.

[Die Freilegung des Horizontes für die ursprünglichste Seinsauslegung soll sie vielmehr vorbereiten. Ist dieser erst gewonnen, dann verlangt die vorbereitende Analytik des Daseins ihre Wiederholung auf der höheren und eigentlichen ontologischen Basis. ... Als der Sinn des Seins des Seienden, das wir Dasein nennen, wird die *Zeitlichkeit* aufgewiesen. Dieser Nachweis muß sich bewähren in der wiederholten Interpretation der vorläufig aufgezeigten Daseinsstrukturen als Modi der Zeitlichkeit.]

For a discussion, see Robert Dostal, “Time and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 155-56.

then, the text is already dominated by the attunement of anxiety. Thus, *Langeweile* too directly and too quickly leads us beyond indifference and ontological indeterminacy to the very meaning of being, which Heidegger “saves” for the discussion in the second division—as well as, presumably, for the projected third division, “Time and Being.” Hence, the “problem” with *Langeweile* is not only that it is marked and determined but also that it is *temporally* marked and determined.

And indeed, in the analysis of boredom, the question of time appears to *force* itself into the inquiry. It arises at the very outset of the analysis, as boredom must immediately be interpreted as the “lengthening of the while”—that is, *Langeweile* as the “*Langwerden der Weile*”; FCM 78 / 118); and on the next leaf, Heidegger already writes:

Boredom—whatever its ultimate essence may be—shows, particularly in our German word, an almost obvious *relation to time*, a way in which we stand with respect to time, a feeling of time. Boredom and the question of boredom thus lead us to the problem of time.

[*Langeweile*—was immer ihr letztes Wesen sein mag—zeigt fast handgreiflich, und besonders in unserem deutschen Wort, ein *Verhältnis zur Zeit*, eine Art, wie wir zur Zeit stehen, ein Zeitgefühl. Also führt uns die *Langeweile* und die Frage nach ihr zum Zeitproblem.]

The entire analysis of boredom consequently unfolds as an attempt to work out the relation between boredom and time. And though on their face these phenomena appear to be different in kind, if there is a single problem that this text may be said to address, it is the problem of *distinguishing* between them. Already in section 19, where the systematic analysis of boredom begins, it is unclear what the difference is between “driving away,” or “dispelling,” boredom and doing the same thing to time. One may drive away boredom (*vertreiben*) we are told, but one may not “annihilate” it by driving away the *time* (*Zeitvertreib*). The verb that Heidegger uses here, *vertreiben*, also means to expel or

banish. A removal of the prefix *ver* yields the verb *treiben*, to drive or propel, from which stems the noun *Trieb*, which is the famous Freudian “instinct” or “drive,” and a crucial notion in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*—arguably linking the two of its main and apparently disparate parts, about boredom and about the animal, together. In the very first paragraph of the lecture course, Heidegger refers to the “*Betrieb der Universität*” (“the business of the university”); in the next sentence, he mentions the “*Öde und Verlorenheit dieses Treibens*,” “the barrenness and waywardness of this activity”; and in the next section, we already “take the lead from the word of Novalis,” who said that: “‘Philosophy is really homesickness, an urge [*Trieb*] to be at home everywhere.’” [“‘Die Philosophie ist eigentlich Heimweh, ein Trieb überall zu Hause zu sein.’”] (5 / 7). Likewise, in the second part of the lecture course, *Trieb* is consistently used to characterize animality vis-à-vis human being and inanimate objects; but we also learn there that the organism is not just a “bundle of drives” (“Bündel von Trieben”; 234 / 341). In connection with this, the central concept of Heidegger’s analysis of boredom is *Zeitvertreib*, which normally translates as passing the time, pastime, or diversion, but literally means dispelling, or expelling the time—that is, propelling or driving, but in a negative way: rather than driving, driving away.

Heidegger introduces the term *Zeitvertreib* right at the outset of the analysis of boredom; and yet just prior to the first occurrence of this crucial word in the book (78 / 118), he discusses the tendency to “drive away” (*vertreiben*) or “shake off” (*verscheuchen*), not the time, but boredom itself. Throughout the analysis, Heidegger exploits the resources of this ambiguity, that is, the ambiguity concerning the relation between the driving away of time and the driving away of boredom, or, more precisely,

between boredom as the experience of avoiding time and the multiple modes of avoidance that this experience entails: the avoidance of boredom itself, the avoidance of admitting that what one feels is boredom, and even the avoidance of admitting that one is at all familiar with this experience: “we do not know of it—therefore it is not there.”

[“Wir wissen nicht von ihr—also ist sie nicht da.”] (ibid.). From yet another perspective, the ambiguity expresses itself in the difficulty to discern the difference between boredom as an attempt to drive away the time and boredom as the *failure* of this attempt.

Subsequently, Heidegger says that it only *appears* as if instead of boredom he had made the driving away of time (*Zeitvertreib*) “an object of an observation” (“*Gegenstand einer Betrachtung*”), “in such a way that boredom is, as it were, simultaneously hidden within our driving away of time as that which we drive away” [“nur so, daß zugleich im *Zeitvertreib* als das darin Vertriebene die Langeweile gleichsam mit darin steckt”] (91 / 137). And soon the problem of the conflation of boredom with time as that which is driven away in boredom takes center stage (93ff. / 140ff.).

Thus working out the first example of boredom, which corresponds to the first form of boredom (“being bored by something”; *Gelangweiltwerden von etwas*), and which consists in a detailed phenomenological description of the experience of waiting for a train after having arrived four hours too early to the train station, Heidegger writes: “Our passing the time... is in itself really a passing of boredom, where passing now means: driving away, shaking off. Passing the time is *a driving away of boredom that drives time on.*” [“Dieses Vertreiben der Zeit ist aber in sich eigentlich ein Vertreiben der Langeweile, wobei Vertreiben jetzt heißt: Weg-treiben, Verscheuchen. *Zeitvertreib* ist *ein Zeit antreibendes Wegtreiben der Langeweile.*”] (93 / 140). The sense of urgency

gradually increases: “We must approach this peculiar *unity of a boredom and a passing the time* in which a confrontation with boredom somehow occurs.” [“Wir müssen uns diese eigentümliche *Einheit* einer *Langeweile* und eines *Zeitvertreibes*, in dem sich eine Auseinandersetzung mit der *Langeweile* irgendwie vollzieht, nahebringen.”] (95 / 143). Thus Heidegger arrives at the conclusion: “*Becoming bored and boredom* in general are... evidently entirely *rooted in this enigmatic essence of time*.” [“Das *Gelangweiltwerden* und die *Langeweile* überhaupt ist dann offenbar ganz *in diesem rätselhaften Wesen der Zeit verwurzelt*.”] (98 / 149). Heidegger subsequently makes the following statement confirming that the conflation of boredom with time is indeed the main *temptation* (*Versuchung*) of the analysis (99 / 149):

We are increasingly tempted to pose the whole problem of boredom simply in terms of the problem of time. And yet we ought not to give in to this temptation, even if it were to simplify our investigation to a certain extent. We must stick with boredom, so that *precisely through its essence we may take a look into the concealed essence of time* and thereby into the connection between the two.

[Immer mehr sind wir versucht, das ganze Problem der *Langeweile* einfach auf das Zeitproblem zu stellen. Und doch dürfen wir dieser Versuchung nicht nachgeben, wenngleich eine gewisse Vereinfachung der Betrachtung dadurch zu erzielen wäre. Wir müssen dabeibleiben bei der *Langeweile*, um gerade *durch ihr Wesen hindurch einen Blick in das verborgene Wesen der Zeit* und damit in den Zusammenhang beider zu tun.]

However, regarding the second form of boredom (*Sichlangweilen bei etwas*), Heidegger presents the driving away, or passing, of time (*Zeitvertreib*) as something that is not so easily detectable. He even considers the option that the difference between the second and the first forms of boredom consists in the opposition between the *absence* (*Ausbleiben*) of the passing of time in the former and their perfect coincidence in the latter (110 / 168). But Heidegger only does that in order to “discover” that the passing of time in the second example is “our *entire comportment and behaviour*,” “the whole

evening of the invitation itself,” and that, “This is why our passing the time was so difficult to find.” [“das ganze *Verhalten und Benehmen* ist der *Zeitvertreib*—der ganze Abend, die Einladung selbst. Daher war der *Zeitvertreib* so schwer zu finden.”] (112 / 170).

Regarding the third and most “profound” form of boredom (*es ist einem langweilig*), Heidegger asserts once again—yet this time *conclusively*—that the passing of time is altogether “*missing*” in it. (“Für diese Langeweile *fehlt* der *Zeitvertreib*”; 135 / 204). But explicating the sense in which the passing of time is missing in this boredom, Heidegger finally discloses the normative aspect of his phenomenological understanding of boredom: “The passing of time corresponding to this boredom is not simply missing, but is *no longer permitted* by us *at all* with regard to this boredom in which we are already attuned.” [“Der dieser Langeweile entsprechende *Zeitvertreib* fehlt nicht einfach, sondern er wird von uns *gar nicht mehr zugelassen* mit Rücksicht auf diese Langeweile, in der wir schon gestimmt sind.”] (136 / 205; trans. modified).

However, the ambiguity ensuing from the phenomenological conflation of boredom with time is not resolved as the analysis is brought to a closure; it is accentuated. On the one hand, Heidegger states: “*What bores us* [*das Langweilende*] in profound boredom, and thus... what is solely and properly boring, is *temporality in a particular way of its temporalizing*.” [“Das in der tiefen Langeweile *Langweilende*, also... das einzig und eigentlich *Langweilende*, ist die *Zeitlichkeit in einer bestimmten Weise ihrer Zeitigung*.”] Yet immediately afterwards Heidegger reformulates his claim: “What is boring is neither beings nor things as such—whether individually or in a context—nor human beings as people we find before us and can ascertain, neither objects nor subjects, but *temporality*

as such [Zeitlichkeit als solche].” [“Das Langweilige sind weder die seienden Dinge als solche—ob einzeln oder im Zusammenhang—noch die seienden Menschen als feststellbare und vorfindliche Personen, weder die Objekte noch die Subjekte, sondern die *Zeitlichkeit als solche*.”] (158 / 237). Comparing these two formulations of what is presented as a single claim, one can see that the ambiguity is preserved in that it remains unclear what the difference is between “temporality as such,” as that which causes boredom, and “temporality in a particular way of its temporalizing,” which is also said to generate the same, most profound form of boredom.

In effect, Heidegger merely confirms here his initial observation that boredom is a feeling of time (*Zeitgefühl*; 78 / 118), as well as his insight, communicated earlier in text, that “boredom is only possible at all because each thing... has *its* time.” [“Die Langeweile ist überhaupt nur möglich, weil jedes Ding... seine Zeit hat.”] (105 / 159). Yet as Heidegger himself reminds his students and readers, “we are not in fact posing the problem of time, the question of what time is, but are posing the three quite different questions of what *world*, *finitude*, and *individuation* are.” [“Aber wir stellen ja doch nicht das Zeitproblem, die Frage was die Zeit sei, sondern drei ganz andere Fragen: was *Welt*, *Endlichkeit*, *Vereinzelung* sei.”] (80 / 120). Heidegger goes on to wonder whether “our three questions are ultimately tied up with the question of time” [“hängen diese Fragen am Ende mit der Frage nach der Zeit zusammen?”] (81 / 121). And to these concerns, which Heidegger raises early in the analysis by way of making preliminary remarks about the pertinence of the analysis to the announced subject of the lecture course, Heidegger returns, by way of recapitulation, in the opening section of its second (and last) part (171 / 253-54):

Yet this profound boredom, and boredom as such, is rooted in the *temporality* of Dasein. Thus in their origin, our three questions themselves reach back into the *question concerning the essence of time*. But the question concerning the essence of time is the *origin of all the questions of metaphysics* and of their potential unfolding.

[Diese tiefe Langeweile und die Langeweile als solche aber ist verwurzelt in der *Zeitlichkeit* des Daseins. Die drei Fragen reichen also selbst in ihrem Ursprung zurück in die *Frage nach dem Wesen der Zeit*. Die Frage nach dem Wesen der Zeit aber ist der *Ursprung aller Fragen der Metaphysik* und ihrer möglichen Entfaltung.]

Coming from the author of *Being and Time*, these assertions are not surprising—just like the suggestions that Heidegger makes on several occasions in the analysis of boredom (e.g., 133 / 201) to the effect of identifying the meaning of the being of human beings with time, even though this may be considered a simplified version of the argument that is actually pursued in *Being and Time*.⁴⁰ Boredom is merely a “way,” one among others (cf. *ibid.*), to the understanding of the essence of time, and it is “rooted,” alongside the concepts of world, individuation, and finitude, in the enigmatic essence of time. What is nonetheless remarkable, however, is that addressing the question of time is never announced as the goal of the inquiry, neither in the titles of the lecture course and its main parts (especially of its first part, which reads “The Awakening of a Fundamental Mood of Our Philosophizing”), nor in its content (as for instance is the question “What is man?”). Granted, while the question of time can qualify, along with the question of being,

⁴⁰ Blattner, for instance, considers this a “primitive exposition of Heidegger’s thought,” as opposed to the “more exact formulations” regarding temporality that one finds in *Being and Time*. Blattner tells a story of development according to which the “primitive” formulation (“Dasein is time itself”), which he detects in the work preceding *Being and Time*—namely, (a) the 1924 lecture at Marburg University “The Concept of Time” (“Der Begriff der Zeit”; see GA 64: 119), (b) the 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time*, and (c) the 1925/26 lecture course *Logic: The Question Concerning Truth* (*Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*)—is “superseded” by the “more exact formulations” of *Being and Time*. It is significant in this regard that the formulation that Blattner qualified as primitive is also detectable in the work following the publication of *Being and Time*. See William Blattner, *Heidegger’s Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xv.

as a career-long interest of Heidegger's,⁴¹ this does not imply that it *must* be announced in each and every Heideggerian text in which it is considered. However, not always is it considered as explicitly and systematically as in the analysis of boredom. (For instance, it is not a central topic, at least not explicitly, in the lecture course's second part). And so the facts that (a) the question of time is not announced in the main titles of the text and (b) it is only explicitly posed *after* boredom has been "awakened" and its analysis has begun add to the overall impression that the question of time *forces* itself into the inquiry; or, put negatively, that Heidegger's phenomenological-hermeneutic approach does not allow him to consider boredom regardless of time.

In *Being and Time*, by contrast, we arrive at temporality through a tortuous conceptual detour and only when we are well into the book's second division (349 / 301). Indeed, most of *Being and Time* does not even deal with time.⁴² Both in *Being and Time* and in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, the analysis proceeds in the direction of becoming more profound. Pursuing the analysis of boredom in the direction of becoming more profound, Heidegger steadily probes deeper and deeper into the essence of time, which he considers the ultimate determinant of being. But unlike *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, in *Being and Time*, this unidirectional movement is almost unrecognizably complicated by the bidirectional, or to-and-fro, movement between authenticity and inauthenticity. This latter movement is generated by the essential restlessness (*Unruhe*) of being, the restlessness due to which being cannot be adequately captured in terms of sheer presence (*Anwesenheit*; BT 47 / 25), or what can

⁴¹ That is, especially if one traces Heidegger's philosophy of time back to Christian eschatology or to the Catholic conception of human finitude. See Wolfe, *Heidegger's Eschatology*, 1-2.

⁴² Though it is of course significant in this regard that the book, as Heidegger had originally envisioned it, was never completed. See Dostal, "Time and Phenomenology," 154.

also be described as the “non-coincidence” of the I and its self.⁴³ This non-coincidence, I would like to argue, appears *only* when existence is considered in non-durational terms, that is, when being is conceived of as one-dimensionally confined to the here and now, be it past, future, or present “here and now.”

In *Being and Time*, there is an “artificial” (formal) dissection of temporality into temporally unmarked stretches from which the authentic-inauthentic movement necessarily ensues due to the essential restlessness that the non-coincidence between the I and the self generates. In broad Heideggerian terms, it can be said that these “stretches” are designated by the three main structural characteristics of Dasein: facticity (*Faktizität*), falling (*Verfallenheit*), and existence (*Existenzialität*; 293 / 249-50), to which correspond, respectively, “being-already-in (the world),” “being-alongside (entities which one encounters within-the-world),” and “being-already-ahead-of-oneself,” that is, “*Schon-sein in (der Welt)*,” “*Sein-bei (innerweltlich begegnenden Seienden)*,” and “*Sich-vorweg-sein*.” From these conceptual elements, Heidegger composes the articulated structure of care (*Sorge*; 237 / 192): “ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the-world) as being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world).” [“*Sich-vorweg-schon-sein-in-(der-Welt-)* als *Sein-bei (innerweltlich begegnendem Seienden)*”]. In its unity, says Heidegger, care “enables the first ontological definition of the totality of the structural totality of Dasein” [“ermöglicht \Rightarrow die erste ontologische Umgrenzung der Ganzheit des Strukturganzen des Daseins.”] (364 / 316). Thus care constitutes the conceptual bridge between being (which is analyzed and dissected into one-dimensional stretches in the preparatory analysis) and

⁴³ The language of non-coincidence (*non-coïncidence*) is utilized by Sartre’s in his analysis of bad faith as well as by Levinas in the context of explicating the notion of the “dia-chrony of time.” See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 110; and Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other: [And Additional Essays]*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 32.

time. But since care primarily belongs to the first division of the book, the concept of care, in itself, is non-durational. It is only *indicative* of temporality. Only in the second division do we learn that the tripartite structure of care parallels, so as to indicate, the tripartite structure of temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), defined as the “unity of a future which makes present in the process of having been” (“*gewesende-gegenwärtigende Zukunft*”; 374 / 326, 401 / 350).

Perhaps most clearly, the authentic-inauthentic movement appears in Heidegger’s concept of falling (*Verfallen*), which is explicitly conceived in terms of movement (BT 221 / 177, 224 / 180; cf. HCT §29) and which is intrinsically related to the movement of thrownness (*Geworfenheit*),⁴⁴ as well as to the various other movements that are described in §38 of *Being and Time*, where the relation between falling and thrownness is systematically worked out. “Falling,” or *Verfallen in das Man*, is the movement of the absorption of the self in its physical and social surroundings, in the pool of beings that populate the world. It is thus the movement of not being oneself, of inauthenticity (which can nonetheless lead to authenticity through anxiety). This movement discloses the evasiveness of being, which originates from the restlessness that is generated by the one-dimensional and non-durational confinement of being to the here-and-now. I shall not dwell here on the necessary movement that emerges from *Existenzialität*, the movement of the *Sich-vorweg* (ahead of oneself), which is indicative of the future and which corresponds to the concept of understanding (*Verstehen*) and to the possibility of authentic existence. The third main structural characteristic of Dasein, however, *Faktizität*, and the ontological dynamics that it generates should be more closely

⁴⁴ At times it even appears that falling and thrownness are interchangeable, as for instance when Heidegger speaks of Dasein as “thrown proximally right into the publicness of the ‘they’” [“gerade zunächst in die Öffentlichkeit des Man geworfen”]; BT 211 / 167.

examined before we go on to see how we arrive from *Befindlichkeit* to the structure of care through the concepts of falling and, then, anxiety, rather than boredom.

Instead of considerations of duration and temporality, the preparatory analysis unfolds in an essential movement that in general outlines can be described in spatial-mechanistic terms as quasi-harmonic motion. The authentic-inauthentic “pendulum” begins to swing in the direction of inauthenticity in *Befindlichkeit*, which corresponds to the structural moment of *Faktizität*; it achieves full speed in *Verfallen*, i.e., in the movement of falling; and in “anxiety,” it reaches a peak (maximum absorption in the world), decelerates to momentary standstill, and, finally, switches the direction of its swing. “Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world.” [“<Die Angst> wirft das Dasein auf das zurück, worum es sich ängstet, sein eigentliches In-der-Welt-sein-können.”] (232 / 187). At this stage, we discover the freedom of Dasein as well as the outstanding and restless element of existence, the *Sich-vorweg-sein*, i.e., the being-ahead-of-oneself, which corresponds to Dasein’s overarching structural characteristic of *Existenzialität* and which brings us all the way back to the *es-geht-um* of being, that is, to that which is at issue in the question of being (235-37 / 191-92). Upon completing a full cycle, this oscillatory movement delineates the total structure of care, which, in the second division, maps onto the structural whole of temporality and being.

Further pursuing the analogy with mechanical harmonic motion, we can also see that the two maxima between which the authentic-inauthentic oscillation takes place are the two modalities of indifference: on the inauthentic side, *Gleichgültigkeit* (indifference) and, on the authentic one, *Gleichmut* (equanimity). *Gleichgültigkeit* is the indifference of

the pallid lack of mood (*die Befindlichkeit der fahlen Ungestimmtheit*), which, as we have seen, is the mood that dominates the “grey everyday” (395 / 345), and, correspondingly, designates the ontological indifference (*Indifferenz*) of Dasein in the mode of everydayness, that is, the indifference of one’s indistinguishability from others in one’s averageness (*Durchschnittlichkeit*; 69 / 43) and leveled down (*eingeebnet*) possibilities of being (165 / 127). *Gleichmut*, on the other hand, which, as Heidegger states, is to be “sharply distinguished” from *Gleichgültigkeit*, is the mood of being-unto-death (*Sein zum Tode*), of resolution (*Entschlossenheit*) and of the moment (*Augenblick*; 396 / 345).

As “a naked ‘that it is and has to be’” (“*nacktes ‘Daß est ist und zu sein hat’*”; 173 / 134), Dasein is revealed by *Befindlichkeit* in its *Geworfenheit*. In other words, the state (of mind), *because* it is conceived of in *non*-durational terms, must bring movement about. *Geworfenheit* leads us then to “the facticity of being delivered over” (*die Faktizität der Überantwortung*; 174 / 135), and thus designates the idea that there is essential dynamics in Dasein’s facticity; that is, that the condition in which Dasein is “found” (*sich befindet*), what it feels, is not a product of a mere aggregation of *facta bruta*. *Befindlichkeit* reveals because it renders obtrusive the “burden of being” (*die Last des Seins*; 173 / 134). It lays bare the resistance and restlessness that characterize Dasein primordially. This resistance is disclosed in a movement, the movement of either “turning towards” or “turning away” (*An- or Abkehr*, 174 / 135; cf. 389-90 / 340), which is essentially the authentic-inauthentic movement.

Methodologically, or by way of demonstration, Heidegger begins his analysis with the “indifference of everydayness,” which he names “averageness” (*Durchschnittlichkeit*; 69 / 43). Since the first layers that are to be removed in a phenomenological investigation

are those which one encounters “proximally and for the most part” (*Zunächst und Zumeist*), the investigation begins with a description of the movement of “turning away,” i.e., the movement in the direction of inauthenticity rather than with that of “turning towards.” Only in his explication of Dasein’s relation to its own death and nullity in the second division, does Heidegger delineate the movement *towards* authenticity. Eventually, Heidegger “overcomes” this dialectical movement through the conceptualization of the call of conscience as a call that “calls us back in calling us forth” (*vorrufender Rückruf*; 326 / 280) as well as through the translation of this bidirectional expression into the expression “anticipatory resoluteness” (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*; 350 / 302). In the analysis of *Befindlichkeit*, however, Heidegger still focuses on how moods reveal Dasein in its *Geworfenheit* through Dasein’s “evasive turning-away” (*ausweichende Abkehr*), the fugitive evasion from both the moods and what they disclose. “In the evasion itself the ‘there’ *is* something disclosed.” [“Im Ausweichen selbst *ist* das Da erschlossene.”] (174 / 135). Thus it is not a “direct search” that leads one to the encounter with the burden of being, but rather the movement of “fleeing” (*fliehen*; 174 / 135; cf. HCT §30). Mostly (*zumeist*), Dasein tends to turn away in order to evade this burden. And because of this inclination, or propensity, this “constant temptation” (*ständige Versuchung*; 221 / 177), Dasein is discovered, *zunächst und zumeist*, in the phenomenon of falling (178 / 139; trans. modified):

Affectedness not only discloses Dasein in its thrownness and its submission to that world which is already disclosed with its own being; it is itself the existential kind of being in which Dasein constantly surrenders itself to the “world” and lets the “world” “matter” to it in such a way that somehow Dasein evades its very self. The existential constitution of such evasion will become clear in the phenomenon of falling.

[Die Befindlichkeit erschließt nicht nur das Dasein in seiner Geworfenheit und Angewiesenheit auf die mit seinem Sein je schon erschlossene Welt, sie ist selbst die

existenziale Seinsart, in der es sich ständig an die “Welt” ausliefert, sich von ihr angehen läßt derart, daß es ihm selbst in gewisser Weise ausweicht. Die existenziale Verfassung dieses Ausweichens wird am Phänomen des Verfallens deutlich werden.]

The dynamics that Heidegger uncovers in the analysis of *Befindlichkeit* are subsequently further explicated through his accounts of idle talk (*Gerede*), curiosity (*Neugier*), and ambiguity (*Zweideutigkeit*) as aspects of the movement of falling. Thus, in his analysis of being-in as such (In-Sein als solches), to which the fifth chapter of the first division is dedicated, Heidegger goes all the way from *Faktizität* to *Verfallen*, that is, from facticity to falling; and hence, if we were to follow Dreyfus and Rubin’s reading, which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, leads them to ask “why doesn’t Dasein seek anxiety rather than flee it?”, we should have already here, in the analysis of *Befindlichkeit*, wondered as to the motivation behind the movement of evasive turning-away. For this is essentially the same movement of fleeing and falling; it is the same movement that leads Dasein to its alienation (*Entfremdung*) and entanglement (*Verfängnis*), that escalates into a downward plunge (*Absturz*) and turbulence (*Wirbel*; 222-24 / 177-80), and that creates the designations of that in the face of which Dasein flees (*Wovor der Flucht*) and that in the face of which it fears (*Wovor der Furcht*), which finally lead us to the concept of anxiety (229-30 / 184-85).

(e) The Univocity of Authenticity and the “Who” of *Being and Time*

This movement, which ensues from the authentic-inauthentic opposition, serves *demonstrative* purposes—as dictated by the division of the treatise into non-durational and durational parts—rather than edifying or psychological-diagnostic ones. In *Being and Time*, I have shown, the methodological movement of becoming more profound, which *guides* the analysis, merges with the dialectical movement of the authentic-inauthentic

opposition, which is *generated by* the analysis due to the restriction of its preparatory part to the non-durational. But even in its own right, this authentic-inauthentic dialectics is a source of much trouble to the reader of *Being and Time*, especially due to the apparent normative sense of this opposition, which does not seem to square with the declared descriptive and formal nature of Heidegger's overall ontological project.

As Taylor Carman points out, although Heidegger explicitly denies that the concepts that he develops in *Being and Time* have moral significance—a denial that as we have seen in the previous chapter, becomes especially explicit with regards to falling (210-11 / 167, 219-20 / 175-76, 224 / 179-80)—he nonetheless employs the notion of authenticity (*eigentlichkeit*) in an evaluative-normative sense, that is, to designate something good and desirable.⁴⁵ Carman seeks to resolve this apparent contradiction by distinguishing between different senses in which Heidegger speaks of “authenticity” in *Being and Time*. In its non-evaluative (i.e., morally neutral) sense, according to Carman, “authenticity” means “ownedness,” i.e., that something uniquely and exclusively characterizes, or belongs, to Dasein, like its “ownmost” possibility of its death. Carman reads “authenticity” in this nonnormative sense as Dasein’s “first-person relation to itself, [and] in contrast to the second- and third- person relations in which it stands to others, and which it can adopt with respect to itself.”⁴⁶ Carman further identifies the problem of “slipping into an estranged, third-person, merely observational attitude about oneself”⁴⁷—which can also be understood as the problem of consciousness, of the

⁴⁵ Taylor Carman, “Authenticity,” in *A Companion to Heidegger*, eds. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 285-86. See also Taylor Carman, “Must We Be Inauthentic?” in *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*, Vol. 1, eds. Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas, (Cambridge: MIT, 2000), 13-28.

⁴⁶ Carman, “Authenticity,” 285.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 292.

continuity of the self, or of the non-coincidence of the “I” and the “self” (see BT 354-65 / 317)—as a central theme in Heidegger’s investigation, and insists, together with Heidegger, that this theme can and should be considered in strictly ontological and non-evaluative terms.

Regarding the normative sense of “authentic” as it occurs in *Being and Time*, Carman introduces further distinctions. On the one hand, Heidegger uses this adjective in an “informal” sense, meaning “real” or “actual.” This sense, as Carman exemplifies, is to be found in the quest for the “real” meaning of the question of being.⁴⁸ According to this reading, the implied “ought” in the notion of “authenticity” as it is employed in this context simply refers to the general rigor and accuracy to which all philosophical reasoning should aspire. On the other hand, Heidegger also uses the concept of authenticity in a “formal” manner, as he does when he means to describe a more virtuous or proper mode of existence. Carman detects this sense of authenticity, which is both normative and formal, in Heidegger’s claim that the “*potentiality-for-being*, as one which is in each case *mine*, is free either for authenticity or for inauthenticity or for a mode in which neither of these has been differentiated.” [“Als je *meines* aber ist das *Seinkönnen* frei für Eigentlichkeit oder Uneigentlichkeit oder die modale Indifferenz ihrer.”] (BT 275 / 232).⁴⁹ Finally, Carman also seeks to resolve in a similar manner the conundrum of this “modal indifference” to the authentic-inauthentic opposition—to which Heidegger also refers earlier on in the book, when he writes: “Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein, and belongs to it as the condition which makes authenticity and inauthenticity possible. In each case Dasein exists in one or the other of these two modes, or else it is modally

⁴⁸ Ibid., 285.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 286.

undifferentiated.” [“Zum existierenden Dasein gehört die Jemeinigkeit als Bedingung der Möglichkeit von Eigentlichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit. Dasein existiert je in einem dieser Modi, bzw. in der modalen Indifferenz ihrer.”] (78 / 53). Carman’s suggestion is that this modal indifference designates yet another distinctive mode of being which is morally neutral in terms of authenticity, and which Carman identifies as “average everydayness,” that is, the realm of the *zunächst und zumeist*, which is the main theme of the preparatory analysis.

Although Carman’s interpretation is illuminating, it entails major reconceptualizations and terminological adaptations that go well beyond the text. For instance, one can hardly understand “average everydayness” as the modal indifference to the authentic-inauthentic opposition when Heidegger clearly considers this mode of being inauthentic, and even explicitly qualifies it as such (BT 223 / 178; cf. FCM 294 / 426). There is no corresponding authentic mode of average everydayness and, in any case, a thing cannot be qualified by a quality to which it is indifferent. It is of course justifiable to consider the authentic-inauthentic opposition in terms of the problem of the third-person perspective, especially given that on several occasions in *Being and Time*, Heidegger himself refers to this issue explicitly, as for instance when he writes: “The they-self keeps on saying ‘I’ most loudly and most frequently because at bottom it *is not authentically* itself, and evades its authentic potentiality-for-being.” [“Das Man-selbst sagt am lautesten und häufigsten Ich-Ich, weil es im Grunde *nicht eigentlich* es selbst *ist* und dem eigentlichen Seinkönnen ausweicht.”] (369 / 322); or in the interpretation of conscience, where Heidegger rhetorically asks: “‘I am good’; who else can say this than the good man himself, and who would be less willing to affirm it?” [“‘ich bin gut’; wer

kann das sagen, und wer wollte es weniger sich bestätigen als gerade der Gute?”] (337-38 / 291). This problem of Pharisaism, or of “good conscience,” equally applies to bad conscience as in both cases Dasein is treated as if it were a “‘household’ whose indebtedness simply need to be balanced off in an orderly manner so that the self may stand ‘by’ as a disinterested spectator while these experiences run their course.” [“ein ‘Haushalt’, dessen Verschuldungen nur ordentlich ausgeglichen zu werden brauchen, damit das Selbst als unbeteiligter Zuschauer ‘neben’ diesen Erlebnisabläufen stehen kann.”] (340 / 293). However, even if the problem of the third-person perspective could in principle be conceived of in nonnormative terms, it is evident that Heidegger chooses to refer to it precisely in moral contexts. Given the nonnormative sense in which, according to Carman, the problem of the third-person perspective is to be understood, why then is it systematically “alloyed” throughout *Being and Time* with normative significance?

Carman’s attempt to dissect and clarify the normative and nonnormative strands in *Being and Time* renders the question all the more conspicuous: why does Heidegger need the notion of authenticity at all? Following Carman, we may dissect the seeming normative and nonnormative aspects of this question; and doing so, we should find ourselves asking two questions: on the one hand, since the notion of authenticity sets the normative tone of the entire treatise, we would find ourselves asking about the analytic function of *all* normative considerations in the existential analytic—and this particularly applies to the use of the theologically and morally charged notions of guilt, conscience, and falling. On the other hand, we would find ourselves asking about the ontological concepts of movement, which, as we have seen, essentially belong to the authentic-

inauthentic dynamics: “evading,” “turning away,” “fleeing,” and, again, “falling.”

Precisely because the latter set of notions can in principle be read in non-evaluative terms (at least if we are willing to follow Heidegger’s reading instructions), we should find ourselves still wondering, together with Dreyfus and Rubin, about their apparent *psychological* implications, and particularly about the insertion of the psychologically charged notion of anxiety. In asking about authenticity, therefore, we ask about the entire “swing” of the authentic-inauthentic pendulum: turning away, evading, fleeing, falling, anxiety, turning towards, death, guilt, and conscience.

But before we ask “*why* authenticity,” perhaps we should inquire: *who* oscillates between the authentic and the inauthentic? Is it the ideal-typical “subject” of the study, which may be encountered either in its everyday conduct or in moments of resoluteness, or the existential analyst, who probes into the question of being in seeking after profound truths? In asking about the motivation or drive behind fleeing from anxiety, behind fleeing in general, or behind evading or falling, do we relate to the consciousness of the study’s “subject,” a Dasein that for some reason tends to evade things or even flee them, or to the consciousness of the analyst, who is, as it were, in a favorable position from which to recommend on gathering “courage” to experience “anxiety in the face of death” (*Mut zur Angst vor dem Tode*; 298 / 254)? While it may seem odd to suggest that the existential analyst herself is the one who is on the run (*auf der Flucht*) in her average everyday conduct, it does seem appropriate to ascribe the tendency to *evade* (*ausweichen*) the meaning of being, i.e., the tendency to understand it inauthentically, as something that is present-at-hand, precisely to the analyst, the one who is engaged in asking the question of being. But “evading” and “fleeing” are at bottom merely different stages of the same

movement, of the same inauthenticity. And hence it seems that it is in the same breath and in similar terms that Heidegger refers to both the failure of philosophy to think being and the failure of Dasein to own up to its being. How then should we understand the authentic-inauthentic movement? To whom should we ascribe it? How should we conceive of the “who” of authenticity, or, indeed, of the “who” of *Being and Time*?

The intuitive answer is of course Heidegger.⁵⁰ But due to considerations of scope, I cannot dwell here on the biographical details that may explain why Heidegger adopts or abandons certain concepts or conceptual frameworks; why he insists on employing theological notions, while dismissing their moralizing significance, and yet intentionally avoids the notion of sin in *Being and Time*; why, out of all human emotions, he is particularly fascinated during this period with anxiety (rather than, say, melancholia, love, pride, or happiness), and then with boredom; or whence comes this burning concern with the question of authenticity.⁵¹ Admittedly, psychologizing Heidegger can be a dangerous philosophical practice. But so, too, can be the psychologization of Dasein. For both approaches entail a subject/object-based conception of consciousness that runs

⁵⁰ Cf. Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 235:

Given the proclamation of anxiety’s “fitness to take over a methodological function in principle for the existential analytic” [“Eignung..., für die existenziale Analytik eine grundsätzliche methodische Funktion zu übernehmen”; BT 235 / 190] as a whole, and the fact that Heidegger’s text is the very performance and demonstration of this existential analysis, the philosopher’s interpretation of anxiety amounts somewhat to a comment on the moodiness of his own hermeneutic practice. In effect he is saying: As everyday Dasein’s existential interpreter, I necessarily proceed from a state of anxiety, for this is the distinctive state of mind enabling one to define “the totality of Dasein’s structural whole” (mood, understanding, discourse, falling) in a phenomenologically unified manner.

Ngai goes on to explain that rather than an attempt at a “psychologization of Heidegger,” this is a claim regarding passivity as the “initial position” of Heidegger’s philosophizing. Ngai’s reading of Heidegger’s concept of anxiety (226-236) is concise and convincing.

⁵¹ Compelling suggestions to this effect—especially regarding the persistence of religiosity in Heidegger’s work, the changing moods of his philosophizing in accordance and discordance with the political situation, career-related choices, and Heidegger’s long-standing anti-modernist approach—are to be found in Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*.

counter to the tenets of Heidegger's philosophy. In asking "Why does Dasein flee anxiety?", Dreyfus and Rubin relate to Dasein as present-at-hand. Moreover, they do so as part of a reading of Heidegger's "thesis" as a present-at-hand description of the structure of being. But *Being and Time* does not lend itself to be read as such, for Heidegger does not merely share with us psychological or anthropological "observations" about the human subject; nor does he prescribe anxiety treatments; nor, indeed, does he preach authenticity. Yet this does not imply that *Being and Time* does not serve a therapeutic function, or that the notion of authenticity is devoid of normative content.

Once one accepts the rejection of the traditional notion of subjectivity, one can no longer isolate the author, the commentator, or the subject of the study—at least not in the framework of a charitable reading of the text. But because our mindset as readers is biased to do precisely that (be it for historical, psychological, or ontological reasons), Heidegger persistently blurs such distinctions; and, as if to compensate for that, he takes care to expose his methodological considerations. (Hence, arguably, the rhetoric of *Durchsichtigkeit*, i.e., transparency.⁵²) The notion of authenticity, because it is often employed to qualify both the processes of the inquiry and the processes that Dasein, so to

⁵² The notion of transparency first occurs on page 24 / 5, where Heidegger states that the question of being must be made transparent. See also 33 / 12, where he suggests that theoretical transparency is only required for the existential, rather than existentiell, understanding of being. On page 186-87 / 146, having defined transparency as "The sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence" ["Die Sicht, die sich primär und im ganzen auf die Existenz bezieht"], Heidegger explains why he "chooses" this term in the following way, in which transparency and obscurity characteristically coincide:

We choose this term to designate "knowledge of the self" in a sense which is well understood, so as to indicate that here it is not a matter of perceptually tracking down and inspecting a point called the "self," but rather one of seizing upon the full disclosedness of being-in-the-world *throughout all* the constitutive items which are essential to it, and doing so with understanding.

[Wir wählen diesen Terminus zur Bezeichnung der wohlverstandenen "Selbsterkenntnis," um anzuzeigen, daß es sich bei ihr nicht um das wahrnehmende Aufspüren und Beschauen eines Selbstpunktes handelt, sondern um ein verstehendes Ergreifen der vollen Erschlossenheit des In-der-Welt-seins *durch* seine wesenhaften Verfassungsmomente *hindurch*.]

speak, “undergoes” in it, has exactly this blurring effect. Instead of introducing distinctions into the meaning of “authenticity” in order to render the text more consistent, I therefore suggest to stress the *univocity* of “authenticity” throughout *Being and Time*. Doing so, I will show, will help us expose some of the complexity of the book’s claim as well as the way that it challenges the traditional philosophical discourse.

In light of Heidegger’s etymological and morphological sensitivities, there is no doubt that his ample use of precisely the word *eigentlich* in its different forms and at the different levels of the treatise’s exposition is purposeful (why, for instance, not use *wirklich* or *echt*, instead or, at least, interchangeably⁵³). Carman’s distinctions are instructive in that they organize and thematize the inconsistencies in the text, but these inconsistencies or perplexities are an integral part of the argument rather than fallacies or ambiguities that should be disentangled or removed. If we wish to adhere more closely to the text, we should read into it only one notion of authenticity, an authenticity which

⁵³ This is of course not to say that Heidegger does not employ these terms in *Being and Time*. The word *echt* occurs in significant moments in the text, for instance in §31 (186 / 146), where Heidegger explicates the modalities of understanding (*Verstehen*):

Understanding is either authentic, arising out of one’s own self as such, or inauthentic. The “in-” of “inauthentic” does not mean that Dasein cuts itself off from its self and understands “only” the world. The world belongs to being-one’s-self as being-in-the-world. On the other hand, authentic understanding, no less than that which is inauthentic, *can* be either genuine [*echt*] or not genuine [*unecht*].

[Das Verstehen ist entweder eigentliches, aus dem eigenen Selbst als solchem entspringendes, oder uneigentliches. Das “Un-” besagt nicht, daß sich das Dasein von seinem Selbst abschnürt und “nur” die Welt versteht. Welt gehört zu seinem Selbstsein als In-der-Welt-sein. Das eigentliche ebensoviel wie das uneigentliche Verstehen *können* wiederum echt oder unecht sein.]

Another important occurrence of *echt* can be found in the next section (§32, 189 / 148), where Heidegger specifies that his discussion of the phenomenon of interpretation (*Auslegung*) follows the lead of “inauthentic understanding [*dem uneigentlichen Verstehen*], and indeed in the mode of its genuineness [und zwar im Modus seiner Echtheit].” In both cases, it seems that *echt* is a determination that is somehow prior to the *Eigentlichkeit/Uneigentlichkeit* determination. But this is apparently so only because, unlike *Eigentlichkeit*, *Echtheit* does not entirely function as a technical term in *Being and Time*. It seems that here, as in the case of the notion of the “mode of indifference” in relation to the question of authenticity (78 / 53, 276 / 232), Heidegger wants to convey the open-endedness of the authentic/inauthentic dialectics.

indeed has normative significance, and which remains nonetheless semantically consistent throughout the treatise: from the sought-after “authentic” meaning of being (19 / 1); through the “inauthentic” existential mode of average everydayness; to the “authenticity” of anticipatory resoluteness.

How then should authenticity be understood given the seeming nonnormative nature of Heidegger’s wider ontological claim? Heidegger gives several explicit answers to this question. The difference between *existentiell* (*existenziell*), which can be modified as either authentic or inauthentic, and *existential* (*existenzial*), which is apparently indifferent to this distinction, is one of them (33 / 12); the corresponding difference between the ontic and the ontological is another (34 / 13). For our purposes, let us focus on yet another important notion in *Being and Time*, which, like “authenticity,” belongs both to the methodological considerations of the analysis and to certain comportment of Dasein so as to blur the distinctions between the nature of the existential analytic and the nature of Dasein; namely, the notion of repetition (*Wiederholung*).

(f) Repetition, Repetition

We first come across the notion of repetition in the heading of the book’s first section, which reads: “The Necessity for Explicitly Repeating the Question of Being” [“Die Notwendigkeit einer ausdrücklichen Wiederholung der Frage nach dem Sein”] (21 / 2; trans. modified: “restating” replaced by “repeating”). At this stage, Heidegger does not elaborate on what precisely he means in his use of the word “repetition” in this context, but soon we learn that it has something to do with the overall project of his constructive “destruction” of the ontological tradition (49 / 26; here, again, *Wiederholung* is rendered “restating” in the translation”). We also learn that repetition is to be understood in

opposition to the positive sciences' notion of progress (*Fortschritt*), and that it designates the course of research that the investigation is about to pursue (76 / 51; here *Wiederholung* is rendered "recapitulating"). Only in the second division, however, do we encounter the next repetition; and this happens when Heidegger sets himself to the task of "repeating" the preparatory analysis (i.e., the analysis of average everydayness) in order to render the phenomenon of temporality "more transparent" (277-78 / 234; here *Wiederholung* is rendered "recapitulating" once again). Yet in the following sections we are presented with new concepts and discussions (death, guilt, conscience) that do not seem to combine so as to map onto the analysis of average everydayness or to deal with temporality in an ontological and explicit manner. What these sections (§§47-64) rather describe, to use again the pendulum metaphor, is Dasein's swing back towards authenticity; that is, the swing which, on the one hand, follows (a) the momentary standstill of the peak of anxiety, (b) the full-speed movement of falling in the direction of inauthenticity, and (c) the starting point of the indifference of average everydayness, and which, on the other hand, culminates in anticipatory resoluteness and the indifference of the *Augenblick* (equanimity). These sections, therefore, do repeat. They repeat the movement of average everydayness, only in opposite direction. However, this movement still belongs to the preparatory analysis—at least inasmuch as this analysis is adequately defined on the basis of the suspension of temporality.

Only towards the fourth chapter of the second division does Heidegger mention "repetition" again—but this time, in contrast to the preceding occurrences of the notion of repetition in the book, it appears to designate a certain comportment of Dasein itself rather than a methodological practice that Heidegger chooses to adopt. This crucial

repetition occurs at what can be considered as the book's point of transition from being to time. At the core of this transition is the phenomenon of anticipatory resoluteness (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*), which Heidegger describes as the “*authentic resoluteness which resolves to keep repeating itself*” (“*die eigentliche Entschlossenheit zur Wiederholung ihrer selbst*”; 355 / 308). Using this expression, Heidegger makes the point that his conceptualization of resoluteness precludes the possibility of “falling back” (*zurückfallen*) into irresoluteness. This notion of resolution, in other words, does not designate an additional stage in Dasein's movement of oscillation between authenticity and inauthenticity; but rather, since it is a resolution to repeat the very resolution itself, it is a certain, true, free, and *irreversible* resolution (354-56 / 307-8). With this sort of resolution, therefore, the to and fro movement of the authentic/inauthentic pendulum comes to a halt. And, as a result, there only remains the unidirectional movement of deepening, i.e., the course of research that proceeds in the *Richtung des Tieferwerdens*, which has been complicated thus far by the authentic/inauthentic oscillation, but can now be rediscovered as the primary course of research that the treatise has been following all along.

The notion of resolution (*Entschlossenheit*) is conceptualized at this turning point as if it were part of the theme, or “subject matter,” of the inquiry, i.e., as something that “belongs” to Dasein. But could it also be the resolution of Heidegger himself, a resolution—the same “resolution that resolves to repeat itself”—that goes all the way back to his proclamation of the necessity of repeating the question of being?

The textual evidence shows that this is indeed the case; and the univocal manner in which, as I have argued, “authenticity” is employed across the different levels of the

investigation appears to confirm precisely that. Right before Heidegger finally sets himself to repeat the preparatory analysis, which is well into the second division, he gives an account of his intention and the methodological considerations that have led him to do so. “By repeating the earlier analysis, we must reveal *everydayness* in its *temporal* meaning, so that the problematic included in temporality may come to light, and the seemingly ‘obvious’ character of the preparatory analyses may completely disappear.”

[“Durch die Wiederholung der früheren Analyse muß sich die *Alltäglichkeit* in ihrem *zeitlichen* Sinne enthüllen, damit die in der Zeitlichkeit beschlossene Problematik an den Tag kommt und die scheinbare ‘Selbstverständlichkeit’ der vorbereitenden Analysen vollends verschwindet.”] (380 / 332).⁵⁴ Thus far, Heidegger tells us here, we have been in the realm of the taken for granted, of the *zunächst und zumeist*; at this point of the investigation, we are finally equipped with the conceptual apparatus that should allow us to reexamine the different characteristics of Dasein that have been discovered in the preparatory analysis; we are finally ready to invest these features with their temporal meaning. But on top of that, Heidegger also suggests here that by repeating the analysis, we are about to lose touch of reality as we know it, for we thereby rid ourselves of the notion of being as presence (i.e., its understanding as something that is one-dimensionally representable) and instead give room to the understanding of being as essentially durational (and, hence, as inconceivable in spatial or quasi-spatial terms). This methodological remark introduces the fourth chapter of the second division, “Temporality and Everydayness” (“*Zeitlichkeit und Alltäglichkeit*”), where the real

⁵⁴ Note that “analysis” appears here in the plural, which can perhaps be read as a confirmation that what I have described for a lack of a better terms as the “swing back” towards authenticity (§§47-64) is still part of the preparatory analysis.

repetition of the preparatory analysis takes place and where Heidegger introduces time into being.

In this chapter, the methodological practice is revealed again as an ontological principle and, for the first time in the book, the notion of repetition is explicitly elaborated upon. But this is done in consideration of repetition as a way of being rather than as a way of philosophizing. “Repetition,” Heidegger says here, is the “authentic having-been” (*das eigentliche Gewesensein*; 388 / 339). Repetition is a way of relating to the past that marks the alternative to the way that we normally relate to it. For normally, we conceive of being as presence and, correspondingly, of the present as an infinitesimal point through which future “nows” become past “nows.” The past is accordingly conceived of as an aggregation of all the “nows” that are no longer present at hand. One may be shaped in a certain way by past events, but the current state of affairs entirely belongs to, or is “contained” in, the present. In our average everydayness, we only have two ways in which to relate to the past: either forget it or remember it. Proximally and for the most part, Heidegger says, Dasein is lost in *das Man* and as such it exists in a state of self-oblivious lostness (*selbstvergessene Verlorenheit*). But unlike what one should have perhaps expected, remembering is not the alternative for that; for in trying to remember the past as authentically as possible in order to construct our identities and more properly be ourselves, we forget that forgetting is not merely the failure of remembering—that remembering is in fact *conditioned* by forgetting (389 / 339). We forget, like Thoth in the *Phaedrus* (274d-275b), that, at bottom, mnemonic devices and practices, such as writing,

only generate amnesia.⁵⁵ At the deeper ontological level, Heidegger suggests, there is no difference between remembering and forgetting as both involve a relation to the past as (no-longer) present-at-hand, and, consequently, both also involve the dissociation of Dasein from its past as well as its isolation in the present. Rather than memory, Heidegger thus says, the proper alternative to forgetfulness—but also to memory itself—is repetition.

But it is not only *das Man* who is inclined to forget; the entire tradition of ontology has precisely the same tendency. This is why the question of being, as Heidegger proclaims right at the outset, has been forgotten (21 / 1); and this is why the same “treatment” is equally applicable to both cases of amnesia: rather than remembering, repeating. And as it is the same “authenticity” so is it the same “repetition” throughout the treatise (although some of the English translators failed to notice that). Or more particularly, just as the meaning of authenticity, which has normative significance and raises the problem of the third-person perspective, remains the same throughout the text, so does also the notion of repetition, which we have found in the “resolution that resolves to repeat itself” and which creates the difficulty to detect the singular voice in which the text is written.

In order to tackle this difficulty, we should consider more closely the two major repetitions that occur in the text. First, as Heidegger explains in the introduction, he repeats the question of being by considering the meaning of being as it has always been considered; namely, as (a) generalizable by analogy, (b) indefinable, and (c) taken for granted (22-24 / 3-4). In this consists the preparatory analysis, which, in accordance with

⁵⁵ Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone, 1981), 91: “Between *mnēmē* and *hypomnēsis*, between memory and its supplement, the line is more than subtle; it is hardly perceptible. On both sides of that line, it is a question of *repetition*.”

the traditional conception of being as infinite and, therefore, a-temporal, does not include explicit considerations of temporality. This very repetition then “demands” (*verlangt*; 38 / 17; trans. modified) another repetition: the repetition of itself. And this second repetition takes place in the fourth chapter of the second division by way of the introduction of time into being.⁵⁶ In the first repetition, there is an oscillation between the authentic and the inauthentic; in the second repetition, this movement ceases due to the irreversible “resolution that resolves to repeat itself.” And instead of this pendulous motion, we find, in the second repetition, the unidirectional movement in the direction of becoming more profound and authentic, while the entire first repetition, which has seemed thus far to include the possibility of authenticity, becomes the inauthentic layer that is to be removed in the process of the analysis. But why this change of analytical dynamics? What does repetition “do” to authenticity?

As Kierkegaard has already shown, and as Deleuze has more recently explained, repetition, as an ontological possibility, poses a paradox.⁵⁷ While common sense admits the *concept* of repetition—we understand, for instance, the role of this concept in *representation*, as in the repetition of the symbol “a” in the formula of identity, $a=a$ —the same common sense resists the idea that complete repetition can in fact occur in reality. For if it is the same thing that repeats itself, then we are left with only one thing, and this is not a repetition; and if it is *one* thing that repeats *another* thing, then it is still not a repetition, since we are left with two distinct entities. In other words, repetition as an

⁵⁶ At the very end of chapter 3, division 2, Heidegger mentions yet another repetition, which is again a repetition of the latter repetition and is “demanded” by itself (382 / 333). It is unclear, however, where and whether this repetition, the repetition of the “existential-temporal analysis,” takes, or is supposed to take, place, perhaps in the projected third division; our focus here, at any rate, is on the first two repetitions.

⁵⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition: An Essay in Experimental Psychology* (1843), trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*.

ontological possibility violates the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. But if we introduce time into the paradox (as did Kant precisely in order to resolve the problem of discernibility), we can reformulate it as follows: two things cannot “be completely together” in the same time, for that which distinguishes between them must keep them apart. And if there is only a time gap between two instances of a singular entity, then it is either the case that such a pure time difference makes no ontological difference, and then it is not a repetition, for we have indeed only one singular entity; or that it is the case that “pure” time difference *does* make an ontological difference—by virtue of, say, some utterly spontaneous and purely passive, and yet somehow intentional, mechanism of “passive synthesis,” or “auto-affection”—but then, again, it is not a repetition because we have two distinct entities. Thus formulated, it is evident that at bottom the paradox of repetition ensues from the commonsense understanding of being as presence and of time as a mere sequence of “nows.” For it is only under such assumptions that we can conceive of “things” or “entities” in their utmost singularity as confined to the here and now and of “pure time difference” as a valid notion in the first place.⁵⁸ Repetition, ontologically conceived, undermines this understanding and requires a new conception of being and an unintuitive theory of time that would account for its paradoxical nature.

It is perhaps clearer now why “repetition” enters the analysis so as to reveal itself as an ontological principle (rather than a mere methodological practice) upon the introduction of time into being in the repetition of the preparatory analysis. As we have seen, this repetition is supposed to eliminate the “taken-for-granted” character of the

⁵⁸ Or as Augustine describes this commonsense understanding of time [having introduced the question “What is time?” by saying, “Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know.”] in Book XI of the *Confessions*: “If it has duration, it is divisible into past and future. But the present occupies no space.” Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 588.

preparatory analysis (380 / 332). However, it is still left to be clarified why precisely at this point of the investigation the guiding principle of authenticity stops generating the oscillatory movement between authenticity and inauthenticity and begins, instead, to lead the discussion in a linear movement in the direction of becoming simultaneously more profound and more authentic. What does repetition “do” to authenticity?

The short answer is: similarly to what it “does” to time, the possibility of repetition undermines the common sense understanding of authenticity. For normally we conceive of authenticity as a measure of the extent to which a certain thing (say, a characteristic of being) adequately “belongs” to or is properly “owned” by another thing. As a normative principle, “authenticity” designates the positive value of this measure. It is thus evident that in thinking of authenticity in this manner, we have in mind a relation between distinct entities or states of affair and that, according to this understanding, perfectly authentic would be the relation between a thing and its self. But this relation entails a repetition: a self that repeats the thing to which it belongs. Thus perceived, the ideal of authenticity is captured in the paradox of repetition. In repetition, perfect authenticity is achieved; and yet this “authenticity” is no longer the familiar, taken-for-granted notion of authenticity. In repetition, in other words, “authenticity” can no longer be understood as a *relational* measure, since repetition can only be conceived of as an operation of the singular.

But this does not imply that through repetition the notion of authenticity is rendered meaningless. Precisely the normative value of authenticity, the virtue of being oneself without assessing one’s self against external criteria (be they set by a past, a future, or an ideal “self”), remains intact. Deleuze’s notion of simulacrum, the copy that overturns the

model, can help us see this point.⁵⁹ Explaining his project of “overturning Platonism,” Deleuze says: “The whole of Platonism is dominated by the idea of drawing a distinction between ‘the thing itself’ and the simulacra... Overturning Platonism... means denying the primacy of original over copy, of model over image; glorifying the reign of simulacra and reflections.”⁶⁰ One observes that “[d]enying the primacy of original over copy” is one thing, and that “glorifying the reign of simulacra and reflections” is quite another. While the former claim stems directly from the elimination of the distinction between the thing itself and its simulacra, and is, therefore, essentially an ontological claim, the latter claim adds a normative component to the ontological argument: the detached copy has a value of its own, and this value is a positive one precisely because it is a copy. And in the absence of the original, this value becomes absolute, that is, non-relational.

It is in this sense that the notion of authenticity is to be understood in our reading of *Being and Time*. For according to Heidegger, too, ontological distinctions should not be drawn between appearances and essences; as implied by his phenomenological formula:” “so much semblance, so much ‘being.’” [“*Wieviel Schein... soviel ‘Sein.’*”] (BT 60 / 36). This is why Heidegger insists that his account of falling everydayness, of the realm of existence that appears at first sight and only on the surface, should not be read as a “moralizing critique” (*moralisierende Kritik*; 211 / 167), or as a “negative evaluation” (*negative Bewertung*; 220 / 175) of human conduct. These remarks should be taken at face value: by no means does Heidegger instruct us to avoid inauthentic living in order to find our paths to authenticity as if authenticity were elsewhere. Rather authenticity is to be sought after, according to Heidegger, precisely within the realms of inauthenticity, so

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, xx.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

as to be discovered, by a mere change of perspective, as nothing else but this very inauthenticity. For “*authentic existence* is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon.” [“die *eigentliche Existenz* <ist> nichts, was über der verfallenden Alltäglichkeit schwebt, sondern existenzial nur ein modifiziertes Ergreifen dieser.”] (224 / 179).⁶¹ Once this understanding is gained and affirmed, there is no “danger” of lapsing back into inauthenticity, as there is no danger that a simulacrum will be discovered as forged. In *Being and Time*, this understanding is achieved through the introduction of the thought of repetition into the analysis. Because repetition entails perfect and non-relational authenticity, it cancels out the possibility of inauthenticity and thereby brings the movement of oscillation to a halt.

(g) Repetition by Way of Secularization

We can now reconsider the two repetitions that we have identified: the repetition of the question of being and the repetition of the preparatory analysis. Repeating the question of being, Heidegger follows his own doctrine as presented in the second division: anticipating that he will repeat the tradition of ontology, he resolves to undertake precisely this task; and from this point on, this resolution has a life of its own. It is a resolution that resolves to repeat itself. It is a pure *conatus* that seeks to remain what it is, and that is the question of being and everything that this question includes. In normative terms, it can be said that this resolution follows the imperative: “become what you are” (see BT 186 / 145), the imperative of authenticity, or self-realization (rather than the classical “know thyself”). Being perfectly authentic, the analysis proceeds by way of

⁶¹ See also BT 303 / 259: “inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity” [“Uneigentlichkeit hat mögliche Eigentlichkeit zum Grunde”].

repeating. But in true repetition, as we have seen, time difference must be meaningful. Therefore, as the analysis proceeds in being what it is, in being the question of being, it absorbs temporal meaning and thereby reveals that the meaning of being *is* time. The time of being is the only thing that actually changes in the book; the meaning of the words employed in the investigation, as well as the meaning of the claim the book makes, remains throughout the same.

Heidegger does not preach authenticity; he *demonstrates* it. He does that by sticking firmly to the question of being and to that which is asked about in the question of being: the kind of being for whom being is an issue, i.e., the *es-geht-um* of being. This basic intention, which already constitutes the meaning of the question, is revealed in the process of the preparatory analysis as a stubborn, outstanding, and unsettled element that cannot be sufficiently accommodated by the inquiry. The *es-geht-um* of being, its *aboutness*, is revealed as the *Sich-vorweg-sein*, the element which is always already “ahead of” us (236 / 191-92). The reason why this element is always ahead of us is because we seek after being within the confines of a narrow, non-durational conception of time: the time of being as either an infinitesimal presence, which elapses with the blink of an eye so as to render all future and past meaningless, or as an infinite presence, which has a similar effect. Always ahead of us in this quest is the next phase of the authentic-inauthentic oscillation. For we either turn-away from or turn-towards (*An-* or *Abkehr*; 174 / 135) the meaning of being as it is intended in the question about being. In turning away, we evade the question of our own existence and, instead, define ourselves in terms of being-in-the-world. Leading our lives according to this understanding, as we gradually immerse ourselves in our daily conduct, social roles, and physical surroundings, we

ultimately forget ourselves and become lost in *das Man*. When this movement reaches its destination, i.e., complete “leveling out” and absorption in the world, the first anxiety episode in the analysis takes place: “anxiety in the face of... being-in-the-world as such” [“Das Wovor der Angst ist das In-der-Welt-sein als solches.”] (230 / 186). We realize that by taking our own existence for granted and engrossing ourselves in external engagements, we have become completely empty and our surroundings has become meaningless. This crisis occurs in a momentary standstill, in which there is neither turning-towards nor turning-away. For an instant, we can capture being in its entirety—including the crucial elusive element of the *Sich-vorweg-sein* (being-ahead-of-oneself). And in virtue of this total grasp of our being, anxiety has the capacity to individualize us (232-35 / 187-91). The internal emptiness and external meaninglessness coincide so as to eliminate all distinctions between “us” and our “selves.” Through anxiety, we thus achieve self-integrity and authenticity. We become individuals, or better still, *Kierkegaardian* individuals.

But since we still operate within the confines of non-durational temporality, as does, according to Heidegger, Kierkegaard himself (BT 497 n. 3 / 338 n.1), this total capture of being is rare; and it can only last for an instant, an instant in which the movement of turning-away switches into a turning-towards: “Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world.” [“<Die Angst> wirft das Dasein auf das zurück, worum es sich ängstet, sein eigentliches In-der-Welt-sein-können.”] (BT 232 / 187). Although we move from this point on in the authentic direction, the sheer fact that we still have to move, the fact that we seek authenticity as if it were elsewhere, attests to our being caught in the paradox of

authenticity, as well as to our ensuing incapacity to capture the *Sich-vorweg* of our existence. In what sense then do we now move “towards” authenticity?

Insofar as *Being and Time*, as Dreyfus and Rubin among others suggest, should be read as a project of secularization of Kierkegaard, this is the point where Heidegger’s appropriation of Kierkegaard becomes explicit. Thus far, in the framework of the announced task of repeating the tradition of ontology, Heidegger has drawn rather eclectically on a variety of sources which are mostly not traceable to a singular scholar or doctrine but rather to a general notion of philosophically informed common sense. From this point on, where the notion of anxiety is introduced, it becomes evident that the repetition of the tradition of ontology is in practice to a large extent a repetition of Kierkegaard. Up until this first “anxiety episode” in the book, i.e., the anxiety in the face of being-in-the-world, Dasein has been falling, it has been subject to what Kierkegaard has already described as the “leveling process.”⁶² At this moment of anxiety, Dasein is transformed into a Kierkegaardian individual, the one who resists the leveling process and strives for subjectivity. In this sense, i.e., in the sense of repeating Kierkegaard, it can be said that anxiety triggers a movement in the authentic direction; and what the wider movement of the analysis reveals is precisely the paradoxical nature of such a quest for subjectivity.

Because at this stage “repetition” remains a mere methodological practice, which, so to speak, “hovers” above the inquiry as a pre- or meta-theoretical guiding principle, it also remains non-durational and “frozen”—and, hence, paradoxical. This paradoxicality translates itself, from within the inquiry, into the paradox of authenticity, which, in turn, unfolds in a series of derivative paradoxes or quasi-paradoxes: the problem of the third-

⁶² Søren Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 51ff.; See Hall, “Love and Death.”

person perspective, the problem of the continuity of the self, the problem of consciousness, the problem of the non-coincidence of the “I” and the “self” etc. In these problems, one can hear concerns such as: How can I be myself? How can I know myself? In trying to be what I am, am I not becoming someone else? Why should I regret or feel sorry for something that “belongs” to the past? How could I be responsible for that which “belongs” to the future? Where do I “belong” in all this? How can I commit myself to the world I inhabit or to a certain role or engagement within this world? Dwelling on such familiar “existential” issues, however, Heidegger, at least in *Being and Time*, and unlike Kierkegaard or Sartre, is not concerned with providing guidance in resolving them, but rather with *repeating* them in order to reveal the kind of being that penetrates through them. Yet in the repetition, this kind of being appears as a Kierkegaardian individual.

Having undergone the first anxiety episode, this individual remains in constant anxiety. Anxiety, as Heidegger says, is “held on to” (*gehalten*; 394 / 344); its *Wovor*, that is, that in the face of which it is experienced, seems to have changed: anxiety in the face of being-in-the-world turns into anxiety in the face of death. The individual, i.e., the kind of being that is *concerned with its individuality*, now understands itself in its “being-towards-death” (*Sein zum Tode*), as a “basis of nullity” (*Grund einer Nichtigkeit*). The time of being thus becomes the lifetime, but this lifetime is still stranded in the present. The Kierkegaardian individual, by postulating the primacy of infinite temporality over the finite, conceives of the “rest” of its own life as something that it “owes” (*schulden*) to the eternal. Hence the sense of guilt and the pangs of conscience that are involved in this experience of anxiety, as well as in Heidegger’s analysis. One need not rely only on the equivocal German *Schuld* in order to see this point; to the extent that we feel that we live

“on borrowed time,” we are all liable to suffer from a sense of a guilty conscience due to the accompanying feeling that we might be “wasting our time,” that is, that we consume our time allocations for inadequate purposes, assuming a potentiality that precedes the present and that can be either properly or improperly actualized (see BT 463 / 410).

Sinfulness, however, is not necessarily involved in this state of anxiety; and this seems to be the reason why it is also redundant to the existential analytic. “The existential analysis of being-guilty proves nothing either *for* or *against* the possibility of sin.” [“Die existenziale Analyse des Schuldigseins beweist weder etwas *für* noch *gegen* die Möglichkeit der Sünde.”] (BT 496 n. ii / 306 n. 1). As we have seen, this is a crucial point where Heidegger departs from Kierkegaard in his conceptualization of anxiety. Indeed, it is by way of secularization that Heidegger repeats Kierkegaard. The theological content is not replicated in the repetition—or better, it does not “survive” the repetition—because the repetition itself undermines the authority of an external origin or end.⁶³ That which remains is thus only the existential-ontological content of the individual’s quest for authenticity. Similar considerations are at work in Heidegger’s disregard of the theological significance of falling (BT 224 / 179-80):

our existential-ontological interpretation makes no ontical assertion about the “corruption of human nature,” not because the necessary evidence is lacking, but because the problematic of this interpretation is *prior* to any assertion about corruption or incorruption. Falling is conceived ontologically as a kind of motion. Ontically, we have not decided whether man is “drunk with sin” and in the *status corruptionis*, whether he walks in the *status integritatis*, or whether he finds himself in an intermediate stage, the *status gratiae*.

⁶³ Cf. Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, 90:

For, in *kenosis*, the artist’s battle against art has been lost, and the poet falls or ebbs into a space and time that confine him, even as he undoes the precursor’s pattern by a deliberate, willed loss in continuity. His stance *appears* to be that of his precursor... but the meaning of the stance is undone; the stance is *emptied* of its priority, which is a kind of godhood, and the poet holding it becomes more isolated, not only from his fellows, but from the continuity of its own self.

[Die existenzial-ontologische Interpretation macht... keine ontische Aussage über die “Verderbnis der menschlichen Natur,” nicht weil die nötigen Beweismittel fehlen, sondern weil ihre Problematik *vor* jeder Aussage über Verderbnis und Unverdorbenheit liegt. Das Verfallen ist ein ontologischer Bewegungsbegriff. Ontisch wird nicht entschieden, ob der Mensch “in der Sünde ersoffen,” im Status corruptionis ist, ob er im Status integritatis wandelt oder sich in einem Zwischenstadium, dem Status gratiae, befindet.]⁶⁴

There is nothing inessential or morally inferior about Dasein’s evading, fleeing, or falling because authenticity, in its normative-evaluative sense, the sense which persists throughout the text, is necessarily non-relational, while all these instances of the movement of “turning-away” can only be ascribed a normative value according to that in the face of which (*das Wovor*) the movement occurs, that is, in relation to some “elsewhere” that should supposedly be confronted or sought after. As the meaning of being consists in that which is intended in the question about being, so does the meaning of authenticity lie in the *quest* for authenticity rather than in that which seems to be sought after in this quest. The preparatory analysis, accordingly, does not aim at presenting us with a theory or description of the dynamics of the human soul that govern its successful or less-successful attempts to find its place in the world or to find its self within the world as if the analyst could assume a detached observer standpoint from which to examine the unconscious motivations behind them and to see beyond the norms and values that guide them. The preparatory analysis’ intent is rather on *repeating* these very attempts as they manifest themselves in the philosophical tradition and in common sense so as to *demonstrate* their paradoxical nature *and expose the absurdity* of being captured in this paradox—as did Diogenes by “pacing back and forth”⁶⁵ when performing his refutation of the Eleatic School’s paradox of movement, and as did Kierkegaard’s

⁶⁴ Cf. HCT 283 / 391.

⁶⁵ Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, 33.

Constantin Constantius by returning to Berlin in his own treatment of the paradox of repetition.

(h) Anxiety Authentically Repeated

But if the movement of turning away and, subsequently, that of turning towards are “merely” repeated in the analysis rather than considered against external theoretical or moral criteria, why does the one direction switch into the other? What prevents Dasein from persisting endlessly in its movement in the inauthentic direction? The obvious answer that the text gives to this question is anxiety. It is therefore time to ask again: Why, at all, does Dasein’s movement of evasive turning away, fleeing, and falling culminate in anxiety?

In the second repetition, that is, the repetition of the preparatory analysis, we can now find clues towards answering this question. Only at this stage, as we have seen, does Heidegger introduce his notion of temporality into the analysis. As we have also seen, this happens when repetition, too, “enters” the analysis, i.e., when it becomes explicit that, rather than a “mere” methodological practice that Heidegger adopts, repetition is a principle that lies at the core of Heidegger’s ontology—or in still other words, that for Heidegger repetition is not only a way of philosophizing but also a way of being. As a way of being, repetition presents itself as Heidegger’s resolution to the paradox of authenticity. We learn, for instance, that it is only due to the understating of being as presence and to the conception of time as a sequence of “now moments” that the problem of the third-person perspective can arise in the first place. Rendering duration meaningful, repetition is revealed as that which vouches for the continuity, or

“steadiness,” of existence (*Stätigkeit der Existenz*).⁶⁶ The outstanding and unsettled element of the *Sich-vorweg*, of being-ahead of oneself, is at last captured by the resolution that resolves to repeat itself to the effect of leading the oscillatory movement to a cessation and “fixating” Dasein’s movement, irreversibly, on the authentic direction. At this stage of the inquiry, the reason (at once the *Wovor* and the *Worum*) for anxiety, after having been first presented as “being-in-the-world as such” and then as “being-unto-death,” or as being towards Dasein’s “ownmost” and “uttermost” possibility of its “absolute impossibility” (294 / 250), is now revealed as the possibility of *repeat-ability* (*Wiederholbarkeit*; 394 / 343), i.e., as the possibility to repeat or to be repeated.

We are familiar with the idea that there is something deeply unsettling in facing the possibility of repetition, be it the possibility of the eternal return of our lives (Nietzsche) or the possibility of the lifelong repetitions of our deeds (Freud). With his notion of finite temporality, however, Heidegger radicalizes repetition to the effect that it applies not only to the lifetime or to the time of our doings (i.e., the time of being-in-the-world) but also to time as such. The Kierkegaardian individual’s understanding of time as “within-timeness” (*Innerzeitigkeit*) enables it, in the existential sphere of Religiousness A, to relate itself to the eternal and face its own nullity through self-annihilation before God and in a manner that allows it to commit itself to certain worldly engagements without

⁶⁶ 443 / 391:

The steadiness of existence is not interrupted thereby but confirmed in the moment of vision. This steadiness is not first formed either through or by the adjoining of “moments” one to another; but these arise from the temporality of that repetition which is futurally in the process-of-having-been—a temporality which has *already been stretched along*.

[Dadurch wird die Stätigkeit der Existenz nicht unterbrochen, sondern gerade augenblicklich bewährt. Die Stätigkeit bildet sich nicht erst durch die und aus der Aneinanderfügung von ‘Augenblicken,’ sondern diese entspringen der *schon erstreckten* Zeitlichkeit der zukünftig gewesenden Wiederholung.]

being subject to the vicissitudes of expectations and disappointments. For Dasein, however, since its existence can be grasped in its totality only under the notion of finite temporality, the time of being is time itself. Dasein's existence thus fully coincides with time so as to "include" the unsettled and outstanding element of the *Sich-vorweg* and "leave no room" for a temporal beyond. When Dasein faces its nullity, therefore, its finitude is not negated; it is affirmed. This affirmation, which strongly resonates with Nietzsche's *amor fati* (see BT 436-38 / 385-86), is that which happens in the moment of anxiety and that which makes anxiety indispensable to the inquiry.

In the first anxiety episode (anxiety in the face of being-in-the-world), this affirmation expresses itself in the reversal that we have identified at the maxima of the pendulous motion. It is the *zurückwerfen* in the sentence "Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world." [*"<Die Angst> wirft das Dasein auf das zurück, worum es sich ängstet, sein eigentliches In-der-Welt-sein-können."*] (232 / 187).⁶⁷ That which is affirmed here is that which, due to the intertwining of Dasein's complete absorption in the world with its self-forgetfulness, appears impossible: being-in-the-world in an authentic way. The collapse of the totality of significance does not render the world delusive; it renders it obtrusive. Being-in-the-world and, with it, everything that appears as taken for granted are confirmed as essential aspects of being in its authentic possibility. And indeed, even though the notion of world becomes less important in the following discussion about being-unto-death, it is clear that Dasein is not turned there into a "worldless subject." In

⁶⁷ See also BT 235 / 191: "This individualization brings Dasein back from its falling, and makes manifest to it that authenticity and inauthenticity are possibilities of its being." [*"Diese Vereinzelung holt das Dasein aus seinem Verfallen zurück und macht ihm Eigentlichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit als Möglichkeiten seines Seins Offenbar."*]. Cf. FCM 295-96 / 428.

anxiety in the face of death, just as in anxiety in the face of being-in-the-world, Dasein is not annihilated in relation to a greater totality; it is affirmed as essentially finite in its authentic possibility. Finally, as time enters the equation in the second repetition, the “that-in-the-face-of-which” of anxiety is revealed as the possibility of repeatability. At this point, as Heidegger explains, “[anxiety] brings one back to the pure ‘that-it-is’ of one’s ownmost individualized thrownness.” [“<die Angst> bringt zurück auf das pure Daß der eigensten, vereinzelt Geworfenheit.”] (394 / 343). In this *zurückbringen* (bringing back), that which is affirmed is the first repetition (that is, the repetition of the question of being) and everything that this repetition includes: being-in-the-world and being-towards-death. That which has appeared impossible or even futile in the first repetition, i.e., capturing existence in its totality while being confined to the present, is affirmed as the key to authenticity. Precisely by restricting our understanding of temporality to the finite, we obtain a comprehensive grasp of our existence. However, rather than a time of being that is confined to the “now moment,” which takes part in a greater indifferent sequence of “nows,” the time of being collapses now into the moment of anticipatory resoluteness. Authenticity, i.e., Dasein’s immediate (non-relational) relation to its self, materializes in the repetition of this resolution, the resolution that has already resolved to repeat itself.

As it is the same authenticity and the same repetition, so is it the same anxiety throughout the text: the authenticity is normative; the repetition (i.e., maximum authenticity) is ontological; and the anxiety is anxiety in the face of repetition. The “rebound effect” of anxiety, i.e., the “throwing back” and “bringing back” (*zurückwerfen* and *zurückbringen*) that it affects, attests to the ultimate closure that is entailed by

repetition. Once entirely absorbed in the world to the point of complete self-forgetfulness, Dasein does not abandon the world but affirms it as an authentic possibility and as a necessary determination of its being. Dasein realizes, as it were, that it is doomed to repeat every single aspect of its being-in-the-world and that in this repetition consists its possibility to become itself and to lead its life authentically. It is in the face of this repetition that anxiety occurs from the get go. But because repetition is still latent at this stage, the *Wovor* of anxiety first presents itself simply as “being-in-the-world as such.” From this point on, anxiety lends itself to be understood as anxiety in the face of death. The compulsion to repeat, if you wish, is revealed, through anxiety, as the death drive. Once absorbed in the world and synchronized with the time of being-in-the-world, Dasein experiences its daily routine as the path to its death, as if the many repetitions of being-in-the-world were parts of the unifying repetition of returning to dust (“the primary habits that we are; the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed,” says Deleuze).⁶⁸ Thus struck by its finitude, Dasein experiences anxiety. But this anxiety, since it is originally generated in the face of the repeatability of Dasein’s finitude, includes the affirmation of this finitude as the horizon of being. This affirmation runs counter to the postulate of sinfulness that Kierkegaard finds in anxiety, since it does not relate itself to a beyond, a beyond in relation to which self-annihilation or eternalization can take place. That is the gist of Heidegger’s secularization of Kierkegaard’s notion of anxiety. Unlike Kierkegaard’s conception of the *Øieblikket* as an “atom of eternity” (CA 89), Heidegger’s *Augenblick* precludes the notion of eternity and designates, instead, the restriction of the totality of being to the finite. This totality of being is encapsulated in Dasein’s anticipatory resoluteness, the resolution that resolves to

⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 74.

repeat itself, which brings us all the way back, and even one step prior, to the inquiry's point of departure: the resolution to repeat the question of being.

Whether it is a “necessity” (*Notwendigkeit*), as Heidegger states (BT 21 / 2), or a compulsion perhaps matters little in practice. Nevertheless, in the absence of a notion of progress (*Fortschritt*), an absence entailed by repetition (BT 21 / 2, 76 / 51, 437-38 / 386), it seems plausible to ascribe a therapeutic function to the investigation. If the hermeneutic circle in which the treatise is enclosed is engendered by the resolution that resolves to repeat itself, then the anxiety that pervades the text is the echo of the *virtual anxiety* that preceded it: the anxiety in the face of the *possibility* of anxiety. Once conceived, this possibility turns into an inevitability. This anxiety must then repeat itself. It is in the face of the possibility of this repetition, the repetition of anxiety, that anxiety is worked out, or “worked through,” in the book. But must have this anxiety been conceived at all? It seems indeed as if anxiety inspires the text from without. What happens then if anxiety, along with sinfulness, is not postulated in the investigation? How, then, is the question of being repeated?

Part II: The Postulate of Anxiety in Freudian Theory

We can only ask whether contemporary man precisely in and through all his contemporary human traits does not suppress that profound boredom, and that means: whether he does not conceal his Dasein as such from himself—in spite of all his psychology and psychoanalysis, indeed precisely *through* psychology, which today even presents itself as depth psychology.

[wir können nur fragen, ob der heutige Mensch nicht gerade in und durch alle seine heutigen Menschlichkeiten jene tiefe Langeweile niederhält, und das heißt, ob er nicht sein Dasein als solches sich verbirgt—trotz all der Psychologie und Psychoanalyse, ja gerade *durch* die Psychologie, die sich heute sogar als Tiefenpsychologie ausgibt.]

(FCM 166 / 248)

Chapter 4: Anxiety as a General Psychoanalytic Presupposition

In the previous part, I presented the hypothesis that there has been a transition from anxiety to boredom in late modernity. I focused on a possible instantiation of this transition in the development of Heidegger's thought, i.e., on the passage from his elaboration of anxiety (*Angst*) as a basic philosophical mood in *Being and Time* (1927) to his extensive interpretation of boredom (*Langeweile*) in similar terms in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (delivered in 1929/30; published in 1983). Heidegger does not consider anxiety and boredom explicitly in a mutual exclusive manner but he does consider them separately, never in terms of each other. I have argued that boredom functions in his thinking as a modified version of, or a substitute for, anxiety. While both anxiety and boredom indicate a certain, potential or actual, absence, a certain encounter with the nothing—be it in the form of internal emptiness, external meaninglessness, or both—their juxtaposition brings telling differences to light.

Considered ontologically, the difference is that while boredom is temporal through and through, anxiety can in principle be conceived of regardless of temporality; or more

precisely, as if temporality were adequately describable by means of spatial metaphors of directionality and movement. I have shown that, with such a non-temporal consideration of anxiety, Heidegger presents us in the first division of *Being and Time*. Anxiety is introduced into the inquiry as part of “the preparatory analysis of Dasein” (*die vorbereitende Analyse des Daseins*), in which the structure of care (*Sorge*) is systematically worked out without references to temporality. I have then demonstrated that this is why the complex oscillations between the authentic and the inauthentic modes of existence, which govern and problematize the ontological investigation in *Being and Time*, are replaced in Heidegger’s analysis of boredom by a unidirectional line of investigation that proceeds steadily in the direction of deepening (*Richtung des Tieferwerdens*), as if without the danger of “relapsing” into inauthenticity.

Another difference between anxiety and boredom is one that primarily has psychological rather than ontological significance. The mood, or affect, of anxiety necessarily involves fear while boredom is inherently devoid of fear. This psychological difference, in turn, expresses itself in ethical terms when it is accordingly realized that boredom must also be devoid of the fear-based senses of guilt and sinfulness. And since guilt and sinfulness are themes that evidently belong to theological discourse, I was prompted to examine the transition from anxiety to boredom in terms of secularization. Hence the fact that much in Heidegger’s philosophy, as commentators have often suggested, can be regarded as an attempt to secularize the teachings of Kierkegaard appeared pertinent to this line of inquiry. While *The Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard considers anxiety a *presupposition* (*Forudsætning*) of original sin (CA 25-51), in *Being and Time*, though extensively using the theological notions of guilt (*Schuld*), conscience

(*Gewissen*), and “falling” (*Verfallen*), Heidegger explicitly denies any sense of sinfulness to each of one them (224 / 179-80, 313 / 269, 306 n. 1 / 496 n. ii, respectively).

Subsequently, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, guilt and other related theologically charged notions are also excluded, and instead of anxiety, there emerges the fundamental mood of boredom.

“Secularization,” of course, does not designate a process whereby religiosity is eliminated. For nothing, in principle, can be eliminated in any significant sense in the history of ideas or emotions. Rather, what “secularization” here means is precisely the persistence of religiosity but in forms that conceal, forget, repress, contradict, or explicitly deny its essence. A persistence of this kind is described by Max Weber in his study of the emergence of the spirit of capitalism from the “ethic” of Protestantism. According to Weber, in spite of the rationalization of society and the “disenchantment” of the modern world, some of the most mundane, systematized, and rationalized aspects of modern life have been determined by distinctively religious sets of ideas, beliefs, and practices which go all the way back to the monastic-ascetic movements of the early Christian era.¹ Likewise, to the extent that it can be claimed that the phenomenon of boredom, as it appears today, is a secularized version of anxiety, this does not imply that anxiety has been overcome, but only that it has been transformed in a manner that conceals its religious origins.

Thus rather than a process of replacement or supersession, my suggestion is that the transition from anxiety to boredom should be regarded as a process of bifurcation, a bifurcation of religious or moral anxiety into two “ideal-typical” secular forms: pathological anxiety and normal anxiety. Pathological anxiety is the direct product of the

¹ Weber, *Protestant Ethic*.

evolving etiological, diagnostic, and therapeutic use of the term “anxiety” and its consequent proliferation in the discourse of psychopathology. Normal anxiety can be regarded as the “residue” of the previously undifferentiated religious anxiety that has not lent itself to systematic psychopathological or therapeutic use. Normal anxiety, I have suggested, is that which so pervasively appears as the phenomenon of boredom. To repeat, this does not mean that with the rise of boredom society has become less religious or moral but only that the phenomenon of the growing prevalence of boredom as a form of experience and expression is evidence to and a concrete instance of the persistence of religiosity through its transformations.

Now the interesting fact constituting the point of departure of the current part of my thesis is that Freud, who often complained about boredom in his personal writings,²

² Here are a few telling examples. On November 10, 1897, he wrote to Fliess, “I am tremendously glad about how you are faring—that your numbers are harmoniously fitting themselves together to form a structure. But I also envy you because once again I do not know at all where I am and am very bored with myself. I shall force myself to write the dream [book] in order to come out of it. The dates of the Bernays family (birthdates) are being put together for you. We are still waiting for a reply from Mama, who is in Merano. I fear some of them will be Jewish dates.” (*Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, 278). Another explicit reference to the relation between boredom and Freud’s writing and reading is to be found in a letter he wrote to his friend Eduard Silberstein on July 30, 1873—at the age of seventeen: “Whatever reason you may have had not to write, please write immediately upon receipt of this letter; if I cannot read and write letters, I am afraid I shall catch + + + cholera + + + out of deadly boredom.” (*Letters of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein*, 28). It is also worth citing the following vivid description of Freud’s anxiety about boredom, given in another letter to Fliess: “Now comes the dead period of which I am afraid—that is, in which I am afraid of myself. Yesterday the fourth patient said good-bye on the most cordial terms, in excellent shape, with Böcklin’s Selected Paintings as a parting present. This case gave me the greatest satisfaction and is perhaps complete. So things have gone well this year. I have finally conquered. But what am I going to do now? I still have three and a half persons—that is, sessions—a day. Not enough toys for the whale. Woe is me when I am bored. All sorts of things can go wrong. I cannot work. I am permeated with laziness; the kind of work I have been doing from October until now is very unlike that which leads to writing, and very unfavorable to it. I have not started the little dream pamphlet for Löwenfeld. I do not even stick to my allotriis [hobbies] but alternate between chess, art history, and prehistory; nothing is permitted to continue for very long. I would like to disappear for a few weeks to someplace where nothing like science exists—that is, apart from the congress with you. If only I had money or a travel companion for Italy!” (letter from May 20, 1900, *Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, 415). Finally, in this context, the following remark made by Freud in a letter to Jung from November 12, 1908 must also be included: “I agree with you completely. It is an honour to have plenty of enemies! Now that we can live, work, publish and enjoy a certain companionship, life is not at all bad and I should not want it to change too soon. When the day of ‘recognition’ comes, it will be to the present what

hardly considered this problem in his clinical and theoretical writings, while anxiety had continuously been a major concern for him since at least the early 1890s, when he wrote about themes such as the sexual etiology of the neuroses and the mechanism of hysterical phenomena and in a series of papers and essays proposed the differentiation between a “particular syndrome” of anxiety neurosis (*Angstneurose*) and the then famous and all-inclusive category of neurasthenia.³ If anything, boredom is first and foremost a psychological phenomenon. Why then was it of no concern to Freud? My suspicion is that this is not simply because boredom is generally, whether justly or unjustly, an overlooked subject. Rather I would like to suggest that boredom has been originally excluded from psychoanalysis precisely because anxiety was *presupposed* by this mode of inquiry.

Thus I examine in this chapter the relative absence of boredom in psychoanalysis by way of exploring the manifest ubiquity of anxiety in this field of theory and practice. In a manner similar to my reading of *Being and Time*, I show that the concept of anxiety, after undergoing several transformations, is eventually revealed as a central presupposition of Freud’s thinking. Here, too, I draw on Kierkegaard’s conception of anxiety as that which

the gruesome magic of the Inferno is to the holy boredom of the Paradiso. (That is, of course, the other way around.)” (*Freud/Jung Letters*, 178).

³ “The Psychotherapy of Hysteria” (1893) in *Studies on Hysteria*, SE 2: 253-305, especially 257ff.; “Zur Psychotherapie der Hysterie,” GW 1: 252-312, 155ff. “The Aetiology of the Neuroses: Draft B from Extracts from the Fliess Papers” (1893), SE 1: 179-184; “(Manuskript B) Die Ätiologie der Neurosen,” in *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse: Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess, Abhandlungen und Notizen aus den Jahren 1887-1902*, Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, and Ernst Kris (London: Imago, 1950), 76-82. “On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description ‘Anxiety Neurosis’” (1894), SE 3: 90-117; “Über die Berechtigung von der Neurasthenie einen bestimmten Symptomenkomplex als ‘Angst-Neurose’ abzutrennen,” GW 1: 315-42. “Draft E from Extracts from the Fliess Papers: How Anxiety Originates” (1894), SE 1: 189-95; “(Manuskript E) Wie die Angst entsteht,” in *Aus den Anfängen*, 98-104. “Draft F. Collection III from Extracts from the Fliess Papers” (1894), SE 1: 195-98; “(Manuskript F) Sammlung III. Nr. I,” in *Aus den Anfängen*, 106-110. “Obsessions and Phobias: Their Psychical Mechanism and Their Aetiology” (1894), SE 3: 69-82; “Obsessions et phobies: Leur mécanisme psychique et leur étiologie,” GW 1: 345-53. “Draft J: Frau P. J. (Aged 27), from Extracts from the Fliess Papers” (1895), SE 1: 215-18; “(Manuskript J) Frau P. J., 27 J.,” in *Aus den Anfängen*, 148-151. See Allan V. Horwitz, *Anxiety: A Short History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 75-97.

is presupposed in the dogma of original sin and I seek to show that anxiety is likewise presupposed in psychoanalysis.⁴ Freud himself, who has most likely never been directly influenced by Kierkegaard, eventually recognizes the presuppositional status that anxiety obtained in his theories. But this realization comes late, only in 1926, when in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*), Freud revises his theory of anxiety and states that at the core of this revision there lies the understanding that all along, “it was anxiety which produced repression and not, as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety.”⁵ Given that, as Freud states in an earlier text (1914), “the theory of repression is the corner-stone [*Grundpfeiler*] on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests,”⁶ the discovery of the primacy of anxiety over repression must cast different light on the entire theoretical edifice that Freud had been constructing along the years, and it is questionable whether he himself sufficiently explored the implications of this revision.⁷

The realization that anxiety is primary even to the basic operation of repression is that which consequently, notably in *Civilization and its Discontents* (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*; 1930), brings Freud to announce his “intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and to show that the

⁴ The affinities between Kierkegaard’s and the psychoanalytic concepts of anxiety are discussed by Erich Przywara in *Das Geheimnis Kierkegaards* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1929), 34ff.

⁵ SE 20: 108-9 / GW 14: 113-205; hereafter abbreviated ISA. Freud repeats this argument in “Anxiety and Instinctual Life” (“Angst und Triebleben”), SE 22: 86 / GW 15: 92: “It was not the repression that created the anxiety; the anxiety was there earlier; it was the anxiety that made the repression.” [“Nicht die Verdrängung schafft die Angst, sondern die Angst ist früher da, die Angst macht die Verdrängung!”]

⁶ “The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” (“Zur Geschichte der psycho-analytischen Bewegung”), SE 14: 16 / GW 10: 54.

⁷ Melanie Klein’s work, which emphasizes the internal sources of anxiety as well as the “gradual nature of the infant’s emotional development,” can be regarded as an attempt to address precisely this issue. As Klein writes, “From the beginning of my psycho-analytic work, my interest was focused on anxiety and its causation, and this brought me nearer to the understanding of the relation between aggression and anxiety.” See Melanie Klein, “A Contribution to the Theory of Anxiety and Guilt,” *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 29 (1948), 119, 123.

price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt.”⁸ As Freud goes on to clarify, “the sense of guilt is at bottom nothing else but a topographical variety of anxiety [*topische Abart der Angst*].”⁹ “The more profound the anxiety,” says Kierkegaard, “the more profound the culture” (CA 42). My argument is that in a manner that indeed echoes Kierkegaard’s conceptualization of anxiety as the presupposition of original sin, as well as Heidegger’s (repressed or formal-indicatory) take on this doctrine, Freud’s acknowledgment of the originary status of anxiety discloses the persistence in psychoanalysis of a notion of guilt that conserves its theological-dogmatic understanding in terms of predestination as well as its corresponding philosophical conception in terms of (essential) potentialities, or capacities, rather than (existential) possibilities.

There is probably not much new in detecting the persistence of religiosity in psychoanalysis; and it should be stressed that however tempting such a direction of inquiry may be, my aim here is not to psychoanalyze Freud, the ardently atheist scientist, by considering the religious undercurrents of his writing in terms of some unconscious repressed ideational content with which his “coherent ego” is somehow in perpetual struggle.¹⁰ Rather, what is at stake here is the identification of anxiety as a presupposition that excludes its immediate secular alternative, which, I would like to argue, is boredom.

In what sense can boredom be considered an “alternative” to anxiety? In his deliberation on the theological doctrine of original sin in *The Concept of Anxiety* (41 /

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), SE 21: 134; *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, GW 14: 493-94.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 135 / 495.

¹⁰ For a consideration of several studies pursuing this “irresistible” line of interpretation see Peter Gay, *A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism, and the Making of Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 18-20.

135), Kierkegaard argues that the concept of anxiety is that which explains the transition from innocence to sinfulness, both in the case of Adam and in the case of every subsequent individual. In the crucial point in the book where he presents his concept of anxiety, he explains in the serious voice of Vigilius Haufniensis, the pseudonymous author of this work, why innocence itself always already involves anxiety.

In [the state of innocence] there is peace and repose, but there is simultaneously something else that is not contention and strife, for there is indeed nothing against which to strive. What, then, is it? Nothing [*Intet*]. But what effect does nothing have? It begets anxiety [*Angest*]. This is the profound secret of innocence [*Uskyldigheden*], that it is at the same time anxiety.

In *Either/Or*, published in the previous year, one finds a rather different story told in an ironic voice by the aesthete (“A”) in a section titled “The Rotation of Crops”:

Since boredom [*Kjedsommelighed*] advances and boredom is the root of all evil, no wonder, then, that the world goes backwards, that evil spreads. This can be traced back to the very beginning of the world. The gods were bored; therefore they created human beings. Adam was bored because he was alone; therefore Eve was created. Since that moment, boredom entered the world and grew in quantity in exact proportion to the growth of population. Adam was bored alone; then Adam and Eve were bored together; then Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel were bored *en famille*. After that, the population of the world increased and the nations were bored *en masse*. To amuse themselves, they hit upon the notion of building a tower so high that it would reach the sky. This notion is just as boring as the tower was high and is a terrible demonstration of how boredom had gained the upper hand. Then they were dispersed around the world, just as people now travel abroad, but they continued to be bored. And what consequences this boredom had: humankind stood tall and fell far, first through Eve, then from the Babylonian tower.¹¹

The ironic, critical tone in which this boredom-based reconstruction of the Biblical narrative is told implies that the author does not consider boredom a real or possible alternative, but an impossible one, an alternative whose obvious absurdity must attest to how divorced it is from reality to think of boredom as a first principle of change, action,

¹¹ Kierkegaard, *Either/Or* 286 / 276.

and propagation.¹² By contrast, Freud usually presents his mythological speculations, his “fantasies of origins,” in a voice, or rhetoric, of scientific rigor and seriousness—though irony definitely plays an important role in them. What then will happen if we try to reconstruct the Freudian myth of origins without a postulate of anxiety and with sheer boredom instead? On its face, such a phylogenetic account seems to be easily translatable to the level of ontogeny and libidinal development: rather than postulating a narcissistic wound, one may consider the psyche’s development from the infantile to the social as a product of self-inflicted boredom; rather than the libidinal dramas of love, anxiety, sacrifice, and identification, one can think of simple curiosity, resulting from the exhaustion of one’s interest in oneself and in one’s innocent and undifferentiated narcissistic world, as the first step in becoming a social being—even autoerotism would no longer have to be an enigma.

Admittedly, these general statements do not really solve any problem at this stage. Nevertheless, they may provide a general picture of the implications that the replacement of anxiety with boredom *could* have had for psychoanalysis from its presuppositional bottom to its practical top. The fact that it was, or *had to be*, anxiety rather than boredom may therefore be of considerable significance for the purpose of differentiating the

¹² The absurdity is further accentuated in the next paragraph (286-7), which includes the following suggestion to the Danish authorities as to how to handle the national debt in a spirit that highlights the inherently consumerist rationale of capitalism (note the analogy between money and freedom and the corresponding analogy between financial debt and mortality):

The country’s financial situation is to be improved by economizing. Can anything more boring be imagined? Instead of increasing the debt, they want to pay it off in installments. From what I know about the political situation, it would be easy for Denmark to borrow fifteen million rix dollars. Why does no one think of this? Now and then we hear that someone is a genius and does not pay his debts; why should a nation not do the same, provided there is agreement? Borrow fifteen million; use it not to pay off our debts but for public entertainment. Let us celebrate the millennium with fun and games. Just as there currently are boxes everywhere for contributions of money, there should be bowls everywhere filled with money. Everything would be free: the theater would be free, prostitutes would be free, rides to Deer Park would be free, funerals would be free, one’s funeral eulogy would be free. I say “free,” for if money is always available, everything is free in a way.

theoretical necessities of psychoanalytic thinking from its cultural contingencies. Yet this may only be so insofar as boredom is indeed such a close alternative to anxiety. And it is not enough to say, or to say that Kierkegaard and Heidegger have said, that both anxiety and boredom are essentially products of the encounter with the nothing or with “beings as a whole.” Something must also be said about the *mechanisms* that generate these emotions and the *dynamics* that characterize them.

We have seen that in *Being and Time*, as the analysis of Dasein proceeds, Kierkegaard’s basic idea that it is the nothing that “begets anxiety” undergoes several adjustments and modifications. The nothing, as the “that in the face of which” (*das Wovor*) of anxiety, is at first translated into “being-in-the-world-as-such,” then into “being-unto-death,” and, lastly, into “the possibility of repeatability” (394 / 343). The first two phases, as noted above, seem to be clear enough. When one is immersed in one’s world to the point of complete self-forgetfulness—which is the ultimate result of Dasein’s falling in *das Man* (or in Kierkegaard’s terms, the process of “levelling,” *Nivelleringen*¹³)—the network of signification or structures of meaning that constitute one’s “world” are liable to sudden collapse. It is not the nothing as such which is consequently experienced and “begets anxiety” but the *absence* of meaning that one *used* to have. In the second phase, likewise, it is the understanding of oneself as the “basis of a nullity” (*Grund einer Nichtigkeit*) that generates anxiety, not nullity itself. But in what sense is the possibility of repeatability next in turn? How does this possibility relate to the nothing? Why does it involve anxiety?

¹³ Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 51ff. / 84ff.

If not the answer then at least the pathos that is relevant to this kind of thinking is to be found in Nietzsche's thought experiment of the eternal return:¹⁴

Let us think this thought in its most terrible [*furchtbar*] form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: "the *eternal recurrence*."

This is the most extreme form of nihilism: the nothing (the "meaningless"), eternally!

[Denken wir diesen Gedanken in seiner furchtbarsten Form: das Dasein; so wie es ist, ohne Sinn und Ziel, aber unvermeidlich wiederkehrend, ohne ein Finale in's Nichts: "*die ewige Wiederkehr*."

Das ist die extremste Form des Nihilismus: das Nichts (das "Sinnlose") ewig!]

Repetition in the eternal return can be a terrifying thought; and it can also be a most boring reality. Assuming that "everything" is the maximum amount of things and that correspondingly "eternity" is the maximum of time, one may ask: what is the temporal correlate of the "nothing?" "Untimely," "timeless," "never," and even "timelessness" seem to function primarily as qualifiers, that is, as attributes *of* some thing or some doing rather than as independent substantives. But if the "nothing... eternally" is the eternal return, then the temporal nothing gains the dignity of action.¹⁵ According to this explanation, it is not the nothing as such that generates anxiety but a nothing that "happens," the very happening of the nothing. This kind of uneventful happening, including the implicated philosophical introduction of duration into the nothing, is captured by the notion of repetition. When nothing happens, there still must be a time in which this nothing happens. This other time must still be there to registers the "pure temporal difference," the duration of the happening of the nothing; and this pure temporal

¹⁴ A fragment from June 10, 1887. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 35-6; *Nietzsches Werke*, II vol. 15 (Leipzig: Naumann, 1901), 21.

¹⁵ This is why Deleuze, too, considers repetition primarily as a kind of conduct (DR 1).

difference, as Deleuze shows in *Difference and Repetition* (*Différence et répétition*; 1968), is precisely that which is involved in the notion of repetition.

The link to boredom is already noticeable but we are still far from a detailed description of how precisely boredom or anxiety are related to repetition; and so we are even farther away from a description of how *both* of these emotions *correlate* to repetition. Nevertheless, with the notion of repetition, rather than the nothing, we begin to obtain a more dynamic picture of anxiety and boredom and of the mechanisms that generate them.

(a) Normal, Neurotic, and Psychotic Repetitions

Repetition can cause both boredom and anxiety. Concerning boredom, it is easy to see how the repetitive becomes boring: when something impresses us with no novelty, we may deem it repetitive in a boring way. This of course does not imply that repetition is *necessarily* boring. In fact, we usually feel quite at ease precisely when we know that certain repetitions do take place, whether in us or in our surroundings—that our heart keeps beating, that the laws of nature are regularly observed, that the sun rises on a daily basis. Scientists may be fascinated in their observation of repetitions that could confirm or challenge certain theories. A child, as Freud observes, tirelessly cries “again” after the completion of a playful act (and often, significantly, shortly beforehand). And even though Freud claims that in the case of adults, “novelty is always the condition of enjoyment,” it is indisputable that entertainment for adults, too, is usually replete with repetitions.¹⁶ Yet when our attention is invested in something that yields nothing new for us, we might just as well feel a certain agitation that can be experienced or expressed as

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), SE 18: 35; *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, GW 13: 37. Hereafter abbreviated BPP.

boredom. In other cases still, like that of Qoheleth, repetition may induce a sort of melancholic despair in the soul of the perceiver: “That which has been is what will be. That which is done is what will be done. And there is nothing new under the sun.”¹⁷ In view of such phenomena, “repetition” can be provisionally defined as the absence of novelty—or to use Gregory Bateson’s famous definition of information, the lack of “a difference that makes a difference”¹⁸ between two or more successive instances of one’s lived experience. Boredom can correspondingly be understood as the very need or desire for novelty. There is nothing trivial about the way and conditions in which repetition leads to boredom—rather than, say, pleasure, irritation, indifference, despair, or even hope. Yet it presumably takes little effort to grasp the immediate relations between repetition and boredom. But though the relations between repetition and anxiety are no less intimate and fundamental, they are much less obvious. We need the help of a Freud to see them.

There is an important difference between perceiving something *as* repetitive and actually repeating. The consideration of something *as* repetitive is, in itself, not an act of repetition. When one deems something boring on grounds of repetitiveness, one does so by an appeal to the *form* of repetition—what Deleuze calls “brute” or “bare” repetition, or “repetition of the same” (DR 16-24). In the making of such a judgment, the repetitive quality is ascribed to an *external* source of meaningless, because undifferentiated, stimuli in a way that does not suggest that there *actually* occurs a repetition, or that repetition is experienced *in reality*, but only that a *form of sameness* that has been singled out and *abstracted* from the stimuli recurs in a non-modified way. Formally, therefore,

¹⁷ *Ecclesiastes*, 1:9. New King James Version, 1982; italics omitted.

¹⁸ Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution and Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 318.

“repetition” designates in this example the meaninglessness, i.e., the superfluous or redundant character, of an iteration in relation to some content that persists unaltered. In reality, however, when repetition is experienced as coming from within, it must be meaningful, even overwhelmingly so.

But what does it mean that repetition is experienced as “coming from within” rather than “from without”? What constitutes a “real” experience of repetition, as opposed to a “merely” formal one, and in what sense is the formal “less real” than the real?

Notwithstanding the problematic assumptions involved in the use of the external-internal opposition, or of that of form and content, or, indeed, of any dichotomy whatsoever, it seems appropriate, at least for heuristic purposes, to speak of repetitions that are enacted by the subject as opposed to repetitions that come from without the subject. There is no philosophical justification to assume that the subject is less active when abstracting or extracting a form of sameness that recurs in perception than when conducting herself in a repetitive way. For in order to identify a repetition, so it seems, a certain repetition must already occur within consciousness. But this sort of description assumes a certain investment of intention, or *attention*, on the side of consciousness. Indeed, it is arguable that what matters in the opposition between external/formal and internal/real repetition is, at bottom, intentionality. Upon perceiving something as repetitive in a boring way, one’s intention would normally be to withdraw attention so as to disregard the repetition. But when repetition is experienced as coming from within, when it is performed by the subject, then if it is still boring, it is so in a different way. The question of intention becomes crucial.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*; 1920), Freud suggests that there is nothing wrong or problematic in repetition as long as one assumes an active role in relation to it. Considering the problem of the compulsion to repeat (*Wiederholungszwang*), he gives the example of normal professional or romantic relationships in which a lover, a mentor, or a benefactor realizes that she has been repeatedly following a certain pattern of behavior that has always brought about undesirable outcomes. Freud invokes Nietzsche's thought experiment of the eternal return referring to this phenomenon as the "perpetual recurrence of the same thing" ("ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen"; 23 / 21). This phenomenon, Freud says, causes him "no astonishment when it relates to *active* behavior on the part of the person concerned and when we can discern in him an essential character-trait which always remains the same and which is compelled to find expression in a repetition of the same experience" (22 / 20). In other words, the very character of a person necessarily manifests itself in active repetitions. Moreover, as Freud further suggests in his famous interpretation of the *fort-da* game, it is through repetition that people acquire mastery over their lives, that they become active grownups rather than passive, helpless infants (14-16 / 11-13).

But Freud is not interested here in this normal human capacity, the capacity to acquire habits; that is, he is not interested in *ethics* in the etymological sense of the word. Rather he is "much more impressed by cases where the subject appears to have a *passive* experience, over which he has no influence, but in which he meets with a repetition of the same fatality" (22 / 20). In other words, Freud is primarily interested in repetition when it appears as a *compulsion*.¹⁹ Nietzsche's thought experiment of the eternal return, by

¹⁹ Cf. Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, 80: "Repetition, to Freud, was primarily a mode of compulsion, and reduced to the death instinct by way of inertia, regression, entropy. Fenichel, grim encyclopaedist of the

contrast, is a test of freedom: ““Do you want this again and innumerable times again?””
 [““willst du diese noch einmal und noch unzählige Male?””] asks the demon who presents
 us with the thought experiment in *The Gay Science*; and upon culminating his speech, the
 demon says, “Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to*
long for nothing more fervently than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?”
 [“Oder wie müsstest du dir selber und dem Leben gut werden, um nach *Nichts mehr zu*
verlangen, als nach dieser letzten ewigen Bestätigung und Besiegelung.”]²⁰ For
 Nietzsche, the idea that people grow up to become free agents by repeating what becomes
 their character traits, that is, by acquiring habits, is a fundamental problem of freedom.
 To repeat intentionally and eternally is the highest imperative; to act out of habit,
 although it is still repeating, is never an act of the will.²¹ Thus, in his invocation of
 Nietzsche, Freud assumes what Nietzsche rejects; namely, that that which is normal about
 normal people is that they act intentionally, gradually becoming what they are through
 the acquisition of habits.

It is due to the problem of intention that Freud examines acts of repetition that
 appear compulsive. The idea that the compulsion to repeat must come from within the
 ego is, as we shall see, that which eventually leads him to the discovery of the death drive

Freudian psychodynamics, follows the Founder in allowing for an ‘active’ repetition in order to gain mastery, but also in emphasizing ‘undoing’ repetition, the neurotic trauma so much more vivid to Freud’s imagination.”

²⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), aphorism 341, 194-195; *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft: (“la gaya scienza”)* (Leipzig: Fritzsche, 1887), 254.

²¹ This is why Nietzsche recommends on the paradoxical practice of acquiring “brief habits” (*kurze Gewohnheiten*)—i.e. of conducting oneself in a resolution to repeat that which cannot be reproduced. See *Gay Science*, aphorism 295 (167-68 / 213-14):

I love brief habits and consider them invaluable means for getting to know *many* things and states down to the bottom of their sweetness and bitterness.... *Enduring* habits, however, I hate, and feel as if a tyrant has come near me and the air around me is *thickening* when events take a shape that seems inevitably to produce enduring habits—for instance, owing to an official position, constant relations with the same person, a permanent residence, or uniquely good health.

in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. But this is a later development of Freud's thought (1920). When Freud first introduces the term "compulsion to repeat" (*Wiederholungszwang*) in his 1914 essay "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through" ("Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten"), his considerations of acts of repetition performed by patients are limited to the context of giving "Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis"—as the original main title of this paper reads.²² Rather than a matter of metapsychological speculation, these considerations are presented as an element of the therapeutic process that is involved in a kind of neurosis that Freud describes here, also for the first time, under the heading of the "transference neurosis" (*Übertragungsneurose*). The transference neurosis can be understood as a transitory stage of the treatment in which the autonomy of the agent is suspended so as to allow for the exertion of the influence of the therapist's suggestions. This is how Freud describes the mechanism of the transference neurosis:

The transference... creates an intermediate region between illness and real life [*Zwischenreich zwischen der Krankheit und dem Leben*] through which the transition from the one to the other is made. The new condition has taken over all the features of the illness; but it represents an artificial illness [*artefizielle Krankheit*] which is at every point accessible to our intervention.²³

The transference, however, cannot be observed. It is an emotional constellation that cannot survive the scrutiny of a third party. In the transference, there is no clear "within" to which the act of repetition is traceable but only some sort of an unidentifiable amalgamation of agencies, a mixture of analyst and analysand, in relation to which an economic explanation could still be given, but only at the level of the overall goal of the treatment, which is to turn repetitions into memories. As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen

²² SE 12: 145-56 (see also Strachey's editorial note, on page 146); GW 10: 126-36.

²³ Freud, "Remembering," SE 12: 154 / GW 10: 135.

convincingly argues, the notion of the transference ultimately attests to Freud's essential inability to differentiate his method from that of hypnosis²⁴—a step that was crucial for the establishment of psychoanalysis as a science and, hence, a *generalizable* practice.

But considering this primary concern of Freud, one sees in fact little new in his 1914 essay—except for the now direct and explicit denotation of repetition as a compulsion and of the transference as a kind of neurosis. For this idea goes all the way back to the “prehistory” of psychoanalysis.²⁵ Already in the 1893 essay Freud coauthored with Joseph Breuer, titled “On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication” (“Über den psychischen Mechanismus hysterischer Phänomene: Vorläufige Mitteilung”; hereafter “Preliminary Communication”), which was republished in 1895 as the introduction to the authors’ seminal *Studies on Hysteria* (*Studien über Hysterie*), the idea is clearly articulated: “hysterics,” trauma victims and others, “suffer mainly from reminiscences” [“*der Hysterische leide größtenteils an Reminiszenzen*”],²⁶ that is, they suffer from involuntary repetitions of the affective charge of an overwhelming experience; and in order to achieve a curative effect in therapy, “the psychical process which originally took place must be repeated [*wiederholt*] as vividly as possible” (*Studies* 6 / 85). Thus we can see that the same rationale applies to the specific mechanism of the transference as well as to the more general mechanism of the psychoanalytic cure. As Deleuze explains (DR 19):

The... theatrical and dramatic operation by which healing takes place—or does not take place—has a name: transference. Now transference is still repetition: above all it is repetition. If repetition makes us ill, it also heals us; if it enchains and destroys

²⁴ Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect*, trans. D. Brick et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 55.

²⁵ For Freud's own account of the “pre-history” (*Vorgeschichte*) of psychoanalysis, see his “Psychoanalysis” (1926), SE 20: 263ff.; “Psycho-Analysis,” GW 14: 299ff.

²⁶ SE 2: 7 / GW 1: 86.

us, it also frees us, testifying in both cases to its “demonic” power. All cure is a voyage to the bottom of repetition.

This passage from *Difference and Repetition*, published in 1968, resonates with Jacques Derrida’s “Plato’s Pharmacy” (“La pharmacie de Platon”), which appeared in the same year in the journal *Tel Quel*.²⁷ In this essay, Derrida famously emphasizes the intrinsic ambiguity of Plato’s notion of *pharmakon*, which signifies both poison and remedy, showing how due to lack of caution on the side of his translators, Plato’s assessment of writing in the *Phaedrus* has been traditionally misunderstood. The common rendering of *pharmakon* as *remedy*, Derrida argues,

cancels out the resources of ambiguity and makes more difficult, if not impossible, an understanding of the context. As opposed to “drug” or even “medicine,” *remedy* says the transparent rationality of science, technique, and therapeutic causality, thus excluding from the text any leaning toward the magic virtues of a force whose effects are hard to master, a dynamics that constantly surprises the one who tries to manipulate it as master and as subject.²⁸

In this ambiguity, according to Derrida, consists the significance of the original Platonic myth of Thoth (*Phaedrus* 274e-275a). The myth tells the story of how Thoth proudly presents the art of writing to Thamus, at once a god, a king, and a father, declaring it a *pharmakon* for memory but has his invention criticized by the latter for being a means of forgetting rather than remembering. As Derrida explains, “It is precisely by pointing out... that the *pharmakon* of writing is good for *hypomnēsis* (re-memoration, recollection, consignation) and not for the *mnēmē* (living, knowing memory) that Thamus, in the *Phaedrus*, condemns it as being of little worth.”²⁹ This ambiguity, generated by the opposition between remembering and forgetting, is precisely what is at stake in psychic repetition. “Between *mnēmē* and *hypomnēsis*, between memory and its

²⁷ Derrida, *Dissemination*, 95-171.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

supplement, the line is more than subtle; it is hardly perceptible. On both sides of that line, it is a question of *repetition*.³⁰ Both Thoth's writing cure and Breuer and Freud's talking cure are therefore, in a sense, techniques of remembering designed to transform mechanical repetitions into a "knowing memory" that, in another sense, produce amnesia.

It is through the use the "resources" of this ambiguity that Breuer and Freud make their central argument that "the basis and *sine qua non* of hysteria is the existence of hypnoid states." ["Grundlage und Bedingung der Hysterie ist die Existenz von hypnoiden Zuständen."] ³¹ The curative effect of hypnosis and the symptoms of the illness itself stem from one and the same source: the hypnoid state. Thus the hypnoid state, which is nothing but a state of "suggestibility," appears twice: once in the undermining of the *integrity* of the self (in the process of symptom formation), and, once again, in the undermining of the *autonomy* of the self (during the treatment). The ambiguity thus appears as *agency* ambiguity. In the first instance, the integrity of the self is supposedly lost due to the "splitting," or "dissociating," of consciousness: subgroups of ideas "are cut off from associative communication with the rest of the content of consciousness" (*Studies* 12). In the second instance, due to the intervention of the clinician and the

³⁰ Ibid., 114.

³¹ *Studies* SE 2: 12 / GW 1: 91. As Strachey notes (SE 2: 336), the thesis of hypnoid-states was introduced by Breuer and only reluctantly adopted by Freud, who later (namely in the "Dora" case, published in 1905) renounced it altogether, declaring it "superfluous and misleading." Freud's alternative idea, which he advances on different occasions in *Studies on Hysteria*, is, as we shall see in the next chapter, that of the "neuropsychoses of defense" (*Abwehr-Neuropsychosen*). However, this is entirely in accordance with the point that I wish to stress here, which is that for Freud it was important to emphasize the voluntary nature of hysterical behavior. At this stage I privilege the unity of the text (i.e. of the "Preliminary Communication") and take into consideration the explicit way in which the thesis of hypnoid-states is presented as a central argument by the authors. Moreover, the significance of the difference between "hypnoid-states" and "defense-neuroses" is arguably primarily rhetorical; in practice, both terms designate the same thing, as Freud himself (ironically) admits (SE 2: 286): "I am unable to suppress a suspicion that somewhere or other the roots of hypnoid and defence hysteria come together, and that there the primary factor is defence. But I can say nothing about this."

influence of suggestion, it is the autonomy of the self that is seemingly no longer maintained.

However, while Derrida emphasizes the ambiguity of *pharmakon* in order to rediscover the “magic virtues” of writing, Breuer and Freud use this very ambiguity in the framework of rationalization and disenchantment, the explicit purpose of their writing being to present a new technique and argue in a scientific way for its efficacy as precisely a remedy. By enlarging the extension of the concept of hypnosis, they demonstrate the wider applicability of the curious inter- and intra-psychic forces seen at work in hypnosis. But instead of extending thereby the realms of the magical, they seem to wish to further the neutralization and demystification of these forces. Thus in his account of the case history of Miss Lucy R. in *Studies on Hysteria* (109-10), Freud relates how, being frustrated by recurrent failures to achieve rapport with his patient, “I ostensibly dropped hypnosis, and only asked for ‘concentration’”—but then he goes on to pay his tribute to the power of magic by inventing the “pressure technique.” The hysterics, as presented by Breuer and Freud, and as opposed to the way that they have been presented by Charcot, are not phenomena or spectacles of mysteriously possessed and suggestible personalities, but, first and foremost, persons, agents, who are only *subject* to a variety of hysterical phenomena, which in principle are *generalizable*. In principle, Breuer and Freud say, even common and apparently normal experiences, such as daydreaming, involve the same psychic dynamics that we find in hypnosis (*Studies* 13). The same dynamics are thus equally at work not only in the formation of the disease and in the operation of the remedy but also in most common and banal forms of human experience.

To demonstrate this point, Breuer and Freud mention “needle work and similar occupation” as an example for normal activities that should typically induce daydreaming (*Studies* 13). Evidently, what they have in mind here is repetitive and potentially boredom-inflicting activities. However, as in the case of the aforementioned example from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, i.e., the case of repetitions in normal human relationships, here, too, the invocation of common instances of human conduct has the purpose of suggesting the wider significance of essentially neurotic phenomena, rather than the purpose of calling attention to the essentially normal origins of neurosis. In a similar way, regarding daydreaming as a form of fantasizing, Freud states in “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming” (“Der Dichter und das Phantasieren”; 1908): “A happy person never fantasizes, only an unsatisfied one”; for “the motive forces of fantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single fantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality.” [“Unbefriedigte Wünsche sind die Triebkräfte der Phantasien, und jede einzelne Phantasie ist eine Wunscherfüllung, eine Korrektur der unbefriedigenden Wirklichkeit.”]³² Considering a remark Freud makes earlier on in the same essay, “that most people construct phantasies at times in their lives,”³³ one is forced to conclude that most of the people are also unhappy and unsatisfied—at least some of the time. Sorrow shared is sorrow halved. But does this also imply that sorrow itself is *necessarily* the common ground of sharing and sympathy? As Derrida observes in his reading of Freud’s 1895 manuscript *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, at the most elementary level of Freud’s analysis, there is a postulate of pain.³⁴ This postulate is rendered detectable in the

³² SE 9: 146 / GW 7: 216.

³³ Ibid., 145 / 215.

³⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 202.

notion that in a moment of idleness, or when one is occupied with familiar technical tasks, the psyche should yield primarily to the forces of pain and suffering, rather than plain indifference or innocuous boredom.

We shall return to this point presently. What is important at the moment is to recognize how these theoretical considerations are determined by the wider agenda of psychoanalysis, which, to put it broadly and schematically for the purposes of the current investigation, includes: (a) the overall goal of normalizing the pathological; (b) the means for doing so, which is by extending the category of neurosis as an intermediary between the categories of the normal and the psychotic until it matches the category of culture in scope³⁵; and (c) the privileging of inference from the pathological (and the psychotic) to the normal over inference from the normal to the pathological.³⁶

If one accepts these generalizations regarding the nature of the psychoanalytic project, one can already see that insofar as boredom is indeed inherently non-pathological, it *must* have been overlooked by psychoanalysis. The possibility that happy people fantasize out of sheer boredom, and, likewise, the possibility that unhappy people refrain from fantasizing due to boredom, *must* have been disregarded.³⁷ Although boredom can still be understood as a kind of pain, it is a different kind of pain. Rather than one that stems from a feeling of lack, it is the pain of satiety. And as a different kind

³⁵ and Freud is led to wonder if “humanity as a whole... fell into states analogous to the neuroses.” See Sigmund Freud, “The Future of an Illusion” (1927), SE 21: 43; “Die Zukunft einer Illusion,” GW 14: 366-67; “Civilization and Its Discontents,” SE 21: 144.

³⁶ Or in Freud’s words (*Civilization*, SE 21: 135), “Our study of the neuroses, to which, after all we owe the most valuable pointers to an understanding of normal conditions.” Borch-Jacobsen writes in this regard, “by inferring what is normal (archisociality) from what is pathological (rivalrous, paranoid, sociality), he [Freud] inscribes the pathological within the normal in spite of himself, as it were; he inscribes excess within the norm and the state of war within the state of law.” See Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 88.

³⁷ A case in which boredom is presented as an expression of the inhibition of phantasy is reported by Ralph Greenson in “On Boredom,” see especially 11-12.

of pain, it also involves a different kind of sympathy, one that does not operate according to the moral logic that is traditionally associated with “compassion” or *Mitleid*. The adage “Sorrow shared is sorrow halved” seems to apply differently, no longer in the sense of sharing the burden, or sharing a fate. But whatever the nature or logic of this kind of sharing may be, it seems that in psychoanalysis that which is to be shared is primarily the sorrow of neurosis, a sorrow rooted in anxiety rather than boredom.

Advancing this “sharing agenda,” Breuer and Freud appear to be more concerned with *extending* the category of hypnosis than with *explaining* it. As they themselves admit with respect to the central “problem of the effectiveness of hypnotic suggestions”:

Our observations contribute nothing fresh on this subject [*bringen hierüber nichts Neues*]. But they throw a light on the contradiction between the dictum ‘hysteria is a psychosis’ and the fact that among hysterics may be found people of the clearest intellect, strongest will, greatest character and highest critical power. (*Studies* 13 / 92)

Further describing their contribution to their scientific field toward the end of the essay, Breuer and Freud also emphasize the merely descriptive nature of their study, which “has brought us nearer to an understanding of the *mechanism* of hysterical symptoms and not of the internal causes of hysteria” [“nur der Mechanismus hysterischer Symptome und nicht die inneren Ursachen der Hysterie”] (*Studies* 17 / 97). This better understanding of the mechanisms of hysteria, as well as the curative effect of hypnosis, is achieved by means of extending the categories of hysteria and hypnosis so as to include most familiar and common phenomena. The logic of this extension can be stated as follows: some of the hysterics possess most desirable character traits; *ergo*, it is inadequate to regard them as psychotics. But this logic only applies to the “first group” of hysterics, those who suffer from *acquired* hysteria (*akquirierte Hysterie*), which is

distinguished from the “second group,” which consists of those who suffer from *dispositional* hysteria (*disponierte Hysterie*).³⁸ But that Breuer and Freud themselves are uncertain why this should be so is shown when almost in the same breath they also admit of the paradoxical possibility of hysteria that is at once acquired and dispositional, that is, the acquisition of a disposition to hysteria due to trauma, which is a description that evidently undermines the very rationale of the acquired-dispositional opposition.³⁹ Nevertheless, only in the second group do they detect truly “pathological” functioning of the associative mechanisms of the psyche. What then is the difference between the groups (*Studies* 11 / 90)?

In the first group the patient is determined to forget the distressing experiences and accordingly excludes them so far as possible from association; while in the second group the associative working-over fails to occur because there is no extensive associative connection between the normal state of consciousness and the pathological ones in which the ideas made their appearance.

[In der ersten Gruppe ist es der Vorsatz des Kranken, welcher die peinlichen Erlebnisse vergessen will und dieselben somit möglichst von der Assoziation ausschließt, in der zweiten Gruppe gelingt diese assoziative Verarbeitung darum nicht, weil zwischen dem normalen Bewußtseinszustand und den pathologischen, in denen diese Vorstellungen entstanden sind, eine ausgiebige assoziative Verknüpfung nicht besteht.]

In the first group there is a *determination* (*Vorsatz*) to forget. Herein, arguably, lies *all* the difference. In the second group, the pathology itself is that which acts; it acts *upon* the individual because there is a systemic failure hindering the operation of consciousness

³⁸ On the significance of Freud’s opposition to degeneration theory to the establishment of psychoanalysis, see George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008), 36-37, 50, 138.

³⁹ *Studies*, SE 2: 11: “But it also seems to be true that in many people a psychological trauma *produces* one of these abnormal states.” The opposite but likewise problematic construction is Bergson’s notion of the “habit of contracting... habits,” which Deleuze habitually criticizes in a Nietzschean spirit in *Difference and Repetition* (4), referring to it as a “second nature.” See Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra et al. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 10, 13, 18, 26, 275. On Peirce’s notion of “habit of acquiring habit,” see Helmut Pape, “Rules of Conduct and Their Analogy in Peirce’s Semiotics,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 20, no. 3 (1983), 217.

so that the “associative working-over [assoziative Verarbeitung] fails to occur.” In order to understand the pathological other, in order to normalize the pathological, one must ascribe intention to the other’s behavior. In spite of the ostensible undermining of their integrity and autonomy, the patients are therefore to be regarded primarily and ultimately as human individuals, rather than limit cases of the human psyche. Hence, to the extent that Breuer and Freud’s “Preliminary Communication” indeed heralds a departure from the convictions and methods of hypnosis, its authors’ main argument consists in *ascribing full agency* to the actions of the hysterics, even if at the cost of increasing ambiguity as to the sources of this agency.

The causal relation between the determining psychical trauma and the hysterical phenomenon is not of a kind implying that the trauma merely acts like an *agent provocateur* in releasing the symptom, which thereafter leads an independent existence. We must presume rather that the psychical trauma—or more precisely the memory of the trauma—acts like a foreign body [*Fremdkörper*] which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work [*gegenwärtig wirkendes Agens*]. (*Studies* 6 / 85)

But what is the difference between the “*agent provocateur*,” which “releases symptoms” and then gains “independent existence,” and the putative “foreign body,” which is continuously “at work”? At this stage, it seems that all that Breuer and Freud can say about this is that in the former case the cause is indirect, while it is somehow a direct one in the latter (7 / 86): “The determining process continues to operate in some way or other for years—not indirectly, through a chain of intermediate causal links, but as a *directly* releasing cause” [“nicht indirekt durch Vermittlung einer Kette von kausalen Zwischengliedern, sondern unmittelbar als auslösende Ursache”]. But it remains hard to see in this regard what criteria are supposed to determine whether the relation between the cause and the effect should be considered direct or indirect. While presenting their

observations in a descriptive language, Breuer and Freud make an essentially normative claim: while the trauma is considered to somehow act directly from within the subject, the influence of the therapist's suggestion and its potential curative effect must be considered indirect.

[A]ny residues which may be left in the form of chronic symptoms or attacks are often removed, and permanently so, by our method, because it is a radical [*radikal*] one; in this respect it seems to us far superior in its efficacy to removal through direct suggestion, as it is practised to-day by psychotherapists. (*Studies* 17 / 97)

The method is simple: to listen to the patients and treat them as autonomous individuals. And this is what makes it radical and different from the method of "direct suggestion," which is based on the unilateral intervention of the therapists. This is why, as Freud asserts some two decades later, "the history of psycho-analysis proper only begins with the new technique that dispenses with hypnosis."⁴⁰ The reason is already stated by Freud in an earlier text in which he provides a brief account of the development of his "talking cure" from a "cathartic method" to a "method of free association" and of the parallel constitutive departure of psychoanalysis from hypnosis: "As we all know... it depends upon the choice of the patient whether he can be hypnotized or not, no matter what the skill of the physician may be."⁴¹ Even though they appear to be in a hypnoid state, the hysterics, at least those who suffer from acquired hysteria, are to be regarded as responsible agents. They are the ones who have decided to forget and they are the ones who may eventually remember and produce the therapeutic effect, although they may still need clinical intervention. In order to account for this "radical" ascription of agency, the resources of ambiguity must be exploited; but they must also be cultivated, and this is

⁴⁰ "History," SE 14: 16.

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud, "Freud's Psychoanalytic Procedure" (1904), SE 7: 250; "Die freudsche psychoanalytische Methode," GW 5: 5.

precisely the function of concepts that Freud subsequently develops, such as transference and symptom-formation.

This, it should be stressed, is a deliberate move on Freud's part. The obvious question as to how one should understand intentional forgetting is not overlooked, nor is it postponed or put in brackets. Rather it becomes the subject matter of psychoanalytic inquiry: how to understand the functioning of the "repressing agency," what kind of an agency the unconscious is. But what Freud consistently, perhaps even deliberately, ignores is the fact that intentional remembering is no less problematic than intentional forgetting, that remembering and forgetting are, from an ontological viewpoint, *equally* problematic. As we have seen in the previous part, Heidegger does take this point into account in the second division of *Being and Time*; as does Freud's almost exact contemporary Bergson, who writes in light of the same historic scientific developments that inspire Freud (in fields such as evolutionary biology and psychophysics) and seeks to explain the same psychic phenomena that Freud seeks to explain (notably, hypnosis, aphasia, and shock) but primarily focuses on the problem of remembering and considers it no less problematic than forgetting or repressing. The crucial difference between Bergson and Freud in this regard—aside from the fact that the former is primarily a philosopher and the latter, first and foremost, a psychologist⁴²—is that Freud assumes, following the British empiricist tradition, that the primary operation of the psyche is

⁴² Freud himself drew a sharp distinction between philosophy and psychology. For explicit remarks by Freud in this regard see in his "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," SE 17: 105-106; "Two Encyclopaedia Articles," SE 18: 253-54; and "The Question of Lay Analysis," SE 20: 191. For a critical discussion, see Patricia Herzog, "The Myth of Freud as Anti-philosopher" in *Freud: Appraisals and Reappraisals: Contributions to Freud Studies*, vol. 2, ed. Paul Stepansky (New York: Routledge, 1988), 163-90.

association.⁴³ Association is the force governing the “normal wearing away processes” (“*normale Usur*”) of memory; dissociation is the main operation in the mechanism of hysteria (*Studies* 11 / 90). For Bergson, by contrast, dissociation is the primary fact.⁴⁴ Drawing on Bergson, Deleuze develops his ontology of difference, which posits that the “in-itself” is “pure difference” (DR 125). Likewise, drawing on a slightly different tradition (Saussure) but reading Freud in a remarkably similar way, Derrida develops his semantics of *différance*, designed explicitly to capture the paradoxical mechanism of deferral (*Nachträglichkeit*) that is involved in the Freudian concept of repression.⁴⁵ That which is “yet to be discovered” by Freud (at least until *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) is that which is identified by both Derrida and Deleuze, in a manner that reaches back to Heidegger and Kierkegaard, as the alternative to the dialectics of remembering and forgetting, namely repeating. Let us then examine more closely how the problem of intentional forgetting is brought to the fore by Freud and how the problem of intentional remembering is thereby overshadowed.

(b) The Intentionality of Repression

At the center of these problematics, there lies the thesis of repression (*Verdrängungslehre*), “the corner stone on which the whole structure of psycho-analysis

⁴³ On the significance of Brentano’s influence on Freud in this respect, see William J. McGrath, *Freud’s Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 122-23.

⁴⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy M. Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Martino Publishing, 2011), 215.

⁴⁵ As Derrida puts it in *Writing and Difference* (202-3), repression is the “effort of life to protect itself by deferring a dangerous cathexis.” See also Derrida, “Différance” (1968) in *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 129-60. Around the same time, but in yet another slightly different tradition (namely, Spencer-Brown’s *Laws of Form* [1969], cybernetics, Gregory Bateson), Niklas Luhmann develops his sociology of difference, according to which the main operation defining society, just as any other system, is the differentiation between system and its environment.

rests.”⁴⁶ This thesis, as Strachey notes, makes its first explicit appearance in the “Preliminary Communication,” and this specifically happens on the occasion of Breuer and Freud’s description of the first group of hysterics, those who suffer from acquired rather than dispositional hysteria (*Studies* 10 / 89).

In the first group are those cases in which the patients have not reacted to a psychical trauma because the nature of the trauma excluded a reaction, as in the case of the apparently irreparable loss of a loved person or because social circumstance made a reaction impossible or because it was a question of things which the patient wished to forget [*vergessen wollte*], and therefore intentionally [*absichtlich*] repressed [*verdrängte*] from his conscious thought and inhibited and suppressed [*hemmte und unterdrückte*].

[Zur ersten Gruppe rechnen wir jene Fälle, in denen die Kranken auf psychische Traumen nicht reagiert haben, weil die Natur des Traumas eine Reaktion ausschloß, wie beim unersetzlich erscheinenden Verlust einer geliebten Person, oder weil die sozialen Verhältnisse eine Reaktion unmöglich machten, oder weil es sich um Dinge handelte, die der Kranke vergessen wollte, die er darum absichtlich aus seinem bewußten Denken verdrängte, hemmte und unterdrückte.]

It is as if three different possibilities of acquiring hysteria are suggested in this long sentence: (a) a direct reaction to the trauma would make no difference and, therefore, no sense, as in bereavement; (b) a direct reaction is excluded due to some “social circumstance”; and (c) a direct reaction is *deliberately* avoided by the patients. It is evident, however, that the third possibility is categorically different from the first two. It is not just an example but also a *condition* that qualifies the other two possibilities. As already stressed, what distinguishes the first group from the second is the deliberate nature of the actions of the former and the passivity of the latter. It seems that the authors of *Studies on Hysteria*, especially Freud, felt that this point could not be overemphasized: “the patient wished to forget, and therefore intentionally repressed from his conscious

⁴⁶ Freud, “History,” 16 / 54. See Strachey’s supplemental notes to the *Studies*, 332-3.

thought and inhibited and suppressed.”⁴⁷ Yet Strachey, in his editorial note to this first occurrence of the notion of repression in Freud’s published work, wishes to deemphasize precisely this claim:

On some of its earlier appearances the term “repressed” is accompanied (as here) by the adverb “intentionally” (“*absichtlich*”) or by “deliberately” (“*willkürlich*”). This is expanded by Freud in one place (1896*b*) [“Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence”], where he states that the act of repression is “introduced by an effort of will, for which the motive can be assigned”. Thus the word “intentionally” merely indicates the existence of a motive and carries no implication of *conscious* intention. Indeed, a little later, at the beginning of his second paper on “The Neuro-Psychoses of defence” (1896*b*), Freud explicitly describes the psychological mechanism of defence as “unconscious.”

Strachey’s clarification consists in restricting the meaning of the word “intention” as it is employed in this context. Rather than “intention” as one normally understands it, i.e., an aware decision to act in a way preferable to the actor, here it “merely indicates the existence of a motive,” which is defense. Because the affective content induced in the subject by the traumatic event is not immediately discharged in an adequate reaction, the subject is “motivated” to contain it in a raw, unprocessed form so as to suspend the taking place of the effect of the event, that is, its potential affective expression. Presumably, this procedure is preferable to the patients because by means of it they gain time that may allow them to “work through” the traumatic experience and moderate its affective force. According to this interpretation, the patients are supposedly unaware of the fact that they pursue a preferable coping strategy. Yet they still act purposefully. Only an outside observer, such as the analyst, can be aware of this broader picture. The adverb

⁴⁷ *Studies* SE 2: 10 / GW 1: 89. In the German text it is much clearer that the adverb “intentionally” qualifies not only “repression” but also “inhibition” and “suppression”: “weil es sich um Dinge handelte, die der Kranke vergessen wollte, die er darum absichtlich aus seinem bewussten Denken verdrängte, hemmte und unterdrückte.”

“intentionally” is thus potentially misleading in this context, and therefore, according to Strachey, it should be qualified.

Strachey’s interpretation appears to confirm that it is indeed hard to overemphasize that ascribing intention to the hysterics is exactly that in which Breuer and Freud’s claim consists. A direct student of Brentano, Freud could not be unaware of the philosophical implications of this claim.⁴⁸ It is not only the use of the adverb “intentionally” (*absichtlich*) upon this first occurrence of the term “repression” in Freud’s writings, directly after the expression “wished to forget,” which is conspicuous enough, but much other textual evidence in the *Studies* (mainly found in the sections written by Freud) also indicates that repression is intentionally presented as an intentional act. For instance, regarding the case of Miss Lucy R., Freud writes that “before hysteria can be acquired for the first time one essential condition must be fulfilled: an idea must be *intentionally* [*absichtlich*] repressed from consciousness and excluded from associative modification” (116 / 174). Moreover, it is not only forgetting and repressing that now obtain the status

⁴⁸ Merlan reports that Freud was enrolled in 5 courses taught by Brentano at the University of Vienna between 1874-76 and that the two were also personally acquainted. Systematically exploring the affinities between Freud and Brentano, Barclay remarks that though Brentano eventually gave up the notion of intentionality, he had still been “thoroughly committed to it” while teaching Freud. According to McGrath, Brentano is the “philosopher who most decisively shaped Freud’s emerging interest in psychology,” and “[o]f all the intellectual links between [Brentano’s] ideas and those of Freud, [intentionality] may be the most central.” McGrath also notes that Brentano’s influence on Freud was nevertheless underestimated (notably by Ernest Jones) and cites extensively from the letters of Freud to Eduard Silberstein from that time period, in which Freud tells about his great admiration for his teacher and his plans to pursue a career in philosophy and zoology. The concept of intentionality is also at the center of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic-phenomenological reading of Freud (and understanding of psychoanalysis as a science of interpretation rather than observation)—discussed by Koenig. Frampton provides a helpful overview of this theme in the context of Freud’s renunciation of the seduction theory. Philip Merlan, “Brentano and Freud,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6, no. 3 (1945): 375-377. Philip Merlan, “Brentano and Freud: A Sequel,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 10, no. 3 (1949): 451. James R. Barclay, “Franz Brentano and Sigmund Freud,” *Journal of Existentialism*, 5 (1964): 18. McGrath, *Freud’s Discovery*, 111-13, 124. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 371, 278ff. Thomas R. Koenig, “Ricoeur’s Interpretation of the Relation between Phenomenological Philosophy and Psychoanalysis,” *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 13, no. 2 (1982): 115-142. Michael Frampton, “Considerations on the Role of Brentano’s Concept of Intentionality in Freud’s Repudiation of the Seduction Theory,” *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 18, no. 1 (1991): 27-36.

of volitional faculties, but intentionality also penetrates all the way down to the level of the description of the psychic mechanisms that generate hysteria. Thus having described repression with much precision, following Pierre Janet's dissociation theory, as an "act of splitting of consciousness," Freud states unequivocally: "The splitting of consciousness in these cases of acquired hysteria is accordingly a deliberate and intentional one. At least it is often *introduced* by an act of volition." ["Die Spaltung des Bewußtseins in diesen Fällen akquirierter Hysterie ist somit eine gewollte, absichtliche, oft wenigstens durch einen Willkürakt eingeleitete."] (*Studies* 123 / 182).⁴⁹ Thus, not only repression, but also the *cause* (*Ursache*) of repression, is considered a direct product of "the will of the ego" (*der Wille des Ich*).⁵⁰ And this is confirmed once again in "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence" ("Die Abwehr-Neuropsychosen"; 1894), where Freud relates the story of his scientific discovery: "In the first of these forms [i.e., acquired hysteria] I was repeatedly able to show that *the splitting in the content of consciousness is the result of an act of will* [*die Folge eines Willensaktes*] *on the part of the patient*; that is to say, it is initiated by an effort of will [*Willensanstrengung*] whose motive [*Motiv*] can be specified."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Freud goes on to explain the qualification that it is possible that dissociation is merely "introduced" as a volitional act: "for the actual outcome is something different from what the subject intended. What he wanted was to do away with an idea, as though it had never appeared, but all he succeeds in doing is to isolate it psychically." ["Eigentlich geschieht etwas anderes, als das Individuum beabsichtigt; es möchte eine Vorstellung aufheben, als ob sie gar nie angelangt wäre, es gelingt ihm aber nur, sie psychisch zu isolieren."]

⁵⁰ Ibid., 133 / 194; translation modified. Significantly, in this case, Freud does not oppose this kind of hysteria, which involves willful repression, to the psychotic, dispositional kind of hysteria, but to the innocence of immaturity—here, the innocence of Katharina. This is an early invocation of the idea that in psychosis there is a regression to an infantile stage of libidinal development.

⁵¹ SE 3: 46 / GW 1: 61. Cf. also Sigmund Freud, "The Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness" (1898), SE 3: 296; "Zum psychischen Mechanismus der Vergesslichkeit," GW 1: 526:

Half the secret of hysterical amnesia is uncovered when we say that hysterical people do not know what they do not *want* to know; and psycho-analytic treatment, which endeavours to fill up such gaps of memory in the course of its work, leads us to the discovery that the bringing back of those lost memories is opposed by a certain resistance which has to be counterbalanced by work proportionate to its magnitude.

But what kind of intention is it? While Strachey is apparently correct in claiming that it cannot be a conscious intention, this does not necessarily mean that we can already consider it entirely *unconscious*. For such a determination would eliminate the ambiguity that keeps the notion of intention from losing meaning altogether. In *Studies on Hysteria* (269 / 269), Freud is thus careful not to exclude on this basis: “The hysterical patient’s ‘not knowing’ was in fact a ‘not wanting to know’—a not wanting which might be to a greater or less extent conscious [*mehr oder minder bewusstes*].” Nor can this kind of intention be considered the intention *of* the unconscious—that is, of the topographical-dynamic, nominalized unconscious, in which there are famously no negations, contradictions, linear time, and indications of reality. For the very notion of the unconscious is yet to be developed on the basis of the problematics that ensue from this ascription of agency. In other words, what is at stake here is precisely the understanding of the kind of agency that “performs” the splitting of consciousness so as to create the special psychic content that Freud only later designates as “the unconscious.” Freud’s only resolution to this question, so it seems, is to repeat it in his writings. The ambiguity is thus later on translated into a variety of notions: “compulsion” (*Zwang*), which designates action that may appear intentional and involuntary at once; the “second agency” (*zweite Instanz*) which is problematized in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) as that which “enables to exercise... censorship”⁵²; the “repressing agency”; and, finally

[Das Halbe des Geheimnisses der hysterischen Amnesie ist damit aufgedeckt, dass wir sagen, die Hysterischen wissen nicht, was sie nicht wissen wollen, und die psychoanalytische Kur, welche solche Erinnerungslücken auszufüllen auf ihrem Wege bemüssigt wird, gelangt zur Einsicht, dass der Wiederbringung jeder solchen verlorenen Erinnerung ein gewisser, nach seiner Grösse durch Arbeit aufzuwiegender, Widerstand entgegenwirkt.]

⁵² Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), SE 4: 144; *Die Traumdeutung*, GW 2/3: 149.

(after the transition to the second topography), the “ego,” which is partly conscious and partly unconscious.⁵³

But before we attend to the question as to the “who” of this intention,⁵⁴ we should first examine *what* is intended—and, perhaps even more significantly, what is still *not* intended. In *Studies on Hysteria*, as we have seen, it is suggested that forgetting (as well as “repressing” and “the splitting of consciousness”) is an intentional act. Evidently, what makes this suggestion interesting is the commonsense understanding that it appears to contradict. For normally, remembering is considered intentional while forgetting is seen as a natural, or automatic, process that does not require an “effort of the will.” On top of that, common sense assumes that there is an *inverse relation* between remembering and forgetting, and correspondingly between that which is remembered and that which has been forgotten. In this regard, it can be seen that while Freud challenges this commonsense understanding through the introduction of the unintuitive notion of intentional forgetting, he nevertheless preserves the dualism of remembering and forgetting as well as the structure of inverse relation. Rather than a complete undermining of common sense, he thus only offers a *reversal* of it. In the unique case of acquired hysteria, there is not only intentional forgetting, but also, and in direct correspondence, *unintentional remembering*. “Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences” (*Studies*, 7), that is, from *involuntary memories*. Instead of remembering, they repeat. As Freud later writes, “the patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but *acts* it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he *repeats* it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating.” [“der Analysierte erinnere überhaupt nichts von

⁵³ BPP 18-19 / 17-18. Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SE 19: 17; *Das Ich und das Es*, GW 13: 243-44.

⁵⁴ That is, the question of “the Freudian subject,” which occupies Borch-Jacobsen (*Freudian Subject*, 4-9), among others.

dem Vergessenen und Verdrängten, sondern er agiere es. Er reproduziert es nicht als Erinnerung, sondern als Tat, er wiederholt es, ohne natürlich zu wissen, daß er es wiederholt.”]⁵⁵

(c) The Assumption of an Inverse Relation between Remembering and Forgetting and Deleuze’s Critique of Freud in *Difference and Repetition*

Given these considerations, and since the patients have originally acquired hysteria through intentional forgetting, Freud’s etiological account can be understood according to the following scheme: because the patients have intentionally forgotten, they now involuntarily remember; they unintentionally repeat *because*, and *as much as*, they intentionally repress. Pointing to the significance of this “principle of inverse relation” in Freud’s repression theory, Deleuze incisively argues against it: “I do not repeat because I repress. I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat. I repress, because I can live certain things or certain experiences only in the mode of repetition. I am determined to repress whatever could prevent me from living them thus” (DR 18). As we shall presently see, discovering the primacy of anxiety over repression in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud himself reverses his own model of repression. But before we compare Deleuze’s reversal of Freud with Freud’s self-critical reversal of himself—a juxtaposition which throws light not only on the Deleuzian critique of Freud but also on the nature of psychoanalysis as a project that primarily presupposes anxiety, rather than identity or subjectivity, as commentators from Laplanche and Pontalis, through Deleuze, to Borch-Jacobsen have argued—we should first examine how the model of repression functions in and becomes a problem for psychoanalysis in more general terms.

⁵⁵ Freud, “Remembering,” SE 12: 150 / GW 10: 129.

While the idea of intentional forgetting proves to be a fertile ground for the development of Freud's thought—which is why the theory of repression is “the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests”⁵⁶—the idea of unintentional remembering (i.e., compulsively repeating) proves essentially problematic. Freud can only explain why the patients repress, and *that* they repeat *because* they repress—but he cannot explain why they repeat at all. To use early modern philosophical terminology, repression can only be considered the *sufficient* but not the *efficient* reason of repetition. Where there is intention, there is room for interpretation, for “filling in the gaps” by means of the method of free association and analytic construction. In fact, for the purpose of interpretation, all that one needs to have is an *assumption* of intentionality, a “postulate of meaningfulness.”⁵⁷ The patients are presented with the opportunity to regain the dignity of subjecthood by means of a *biased* focus on the assumed *active* aspect of their behavior. The reasons for repression, its “motives” and “origins,” become the primary subject matter of the analysis; but insofar as they keep repeating, the patients are still considered obsessed. They have normal and understandable intentions (to avoid overwhelming anxiety through the enactment of defense mechanisms), but they have abnormal capacities (to forget intentionally, to dissociate). They *act* abnormally; but the repetitions are deemed, first, necessary for the treatment, and, ultimately, necessary as such.

⁵⁶ Freud, “History,” SE 14: 16 / GW 10: 54.

⁵⁷ As Freud writes in his discussion of the case of “Little Hans”: “The arbitrary [*Willkür*] has no existence in mental life.” SE 10: 102 / GW 7: 337. The expression “postulate of meaningfulness” is from Gary Madison, “The Interpretive Turn in Phenomenology: a Philosophical History,” in *Between Description and Interpretation: The Hermeneutic Turn in Phenomenology*, ed. Andrzej Wiercinski (Toronto: Hermeneutic Press, 2005), 47.

In “Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through,” Freud attempts to extend the therapeutic reasoning that explains the patients’ repetitions in the clinic—that is, the reasoning of the transference as a transitory stage between repeating and remembering—in order to include, according to the same rationale, their repetitions outside the clinic: “We soon perceive that the transference is itself only a piece of repetition, and that the repetition is a transference of the forgotten past not only on to the doctor but also on to all the other aspects of the current situation.” [Wir merken bald, die Übertragung ist selbst nur ein Stück Wiederholung und die Wiederholung ist die Übertragung der vergessenen Vergangenheit nicht nur auf den Arzt, sondern auch auf alle anderen Gebiete der gegenwärtigen Situation.”]⁵⁸ The transference thus gains the status of a neurosis; it is now an “artificial illness” (*artefizielle Krankheit*) and a *stage* of the overall illness that is no longer exclusively defined by resistance and the rapport. Repetition, correspondingly, gains the status of a compulsion. The compulsion to repeat thus relates to intentional forgetting precisely in the same way that normal forgetting relates to normal remembering. In order to understand the neurotics, we should reflect on their behavior as an expression of their subjectivity, not just with respect to their having repressed but also with respect to their repetitions. The nature of the mechanism at work in neurosis can now be described as a direct reversal of the common understanding of remembering and forgetting.

But as long as repetition is conceived of as an unintentional act, this approach remains incongruent with the basic idea that is put forward in *Studies on Hysteria*; namely, that the patients are *equally* in hypnoid states both when they acquire the illness and when they return to health, and that, in both cases, they are to be seen as active

⁵⁸ Freud, “Remembering,” SE 12: 151 / GW 10: 130.

agents. Thus, in effect, Freud finds himself attributing greater power of the will to the patients when considering how they have fallen ill than when considering by what effort they may recover. Thus, in spite of the impetus and rhetoric of scientific rationalization, there persists the magic of the *pharmakon*; there remains the paradox of the transition from the “vivid” repetition and “reliving” of the trauma, to the normal reflective remembering of it, from *Wiederholung* to *Erinnerung*, from dramatization to de-dramatization, from mimesis to diegesis.⁵⁹

In this respect, as in many others in the history of Freudianism, and insofar as there is indeed a distinctive textual turning point in this history, it can be located in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Here Freud famously prepares the ground for the “second topography,” of the ego, the id, and the super-ego, by replacing the contrast “between the conscious and the unconscious” (“das Bewußte und das Unbewußte”) with the contrast “between the coherent *ego* and the *repressed*” (“das zusammenhängende Ich und das Verdrängte”; 19 / 18). “The power of the repressed” manifests itself in the phenomenon of “the compulsion to repeat” (*Wiederholungszwang*), which “overrides the pleasure principle” (“sich über das Lustprinzip hinaussetzt”; 24 / 21) and points to the existence of the death drive (*Todestrieb*). With the introduction of the death drive, Freud finally locates psychic repetition inside the ego. Although the conceptualization of repetition as a compulsion in 1914 already suggests that it is a force coming from within the subject, only now is the compulsion traced all the way back to its instinctual source. This means that, in line with the original goal pursued in *Studies on Hysteria* (which is to normalize the pathological by means of the extension of the category of neurosis and the ascription of agency to neurotic behavior), the patients can now be fully ascribed agency both with

⁵⁹ See Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 31-40.

respect to their having repressed and with respect to their present repeating. The ego is now the repressing agency, the repeating agency, and, as Freud states in *The Ego and the Id*, “the actual seat of anxiety.” [“Das Ich ist ja die eigentliche Angststätte.”]⁶⁰ This is how Freud explains the general motivation behind his claim in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (21):

The impression they [the neurotics] give is of being pursued by a malignant fate or possessed by some “daemonic” power; but psycho-analysis has always taken the view that their fate is for the most part arranged by themselves and determined by early infantile influences. The compulsion which is here in evidence [i.e., in cases of normal repetitions] differs in no way from the compulsion to repeat which we have found in neurotics, even though the people we are now considering [i.e., normal people] have never shown any signs of dealing with a neurotic conflict by producing symptoms.

This indeed appears like another step towards the ascription of further agency to the neurotics. Their repetitions are now considered precisely as those of normal people; and, therefore, in both cases, Freud can now consider them in terms of compulsion. But notwithstanding this clear line of development, the interesting fact that stands out is that, for Freud, repetition remains *primarily* a compulsion; or more precisely, only as a compulsion is repetition at all *interesting* for him. And this is so, as I have suggested, because he prefers to infer from the pathological *to* the normal rather than the other way around. To the extent that repetition is intentional (or “active”), as we have seen, it is merely a normal phenomenon, the all too common phenomenon of having characters or acquiring habits, which may require an explanation, but is somehow less interesting. And hence, although the compulsion to repeat “overrides the pleasure principle,” this only indicates that *there is* a “beyond,” a “beyond” which can only be a subject for meta-psychological speculations. In practice, however, when it comes to description rather than

⁶⁰ SE 19: 57 / GW 13: 287; or as Freud states in the *New Introductory Lectures* (SE 22: 85 / GW 15: 91): “The ego is the sole seat of anxiety.” [“das Ich ist die alleinige Angststätte.”]

speculation, the economic explanation still holds. The original dualism of remembering and forgetting, in its inverse form and as it already appears in *Studies on Hysteria*, is reinstated. Even after *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, as Deleuze explains (DR 18), “the law of an inverse relation between repetition and remembering is in every respect hardly satisfactory, in so far as it makes repetition depend upon repression.” Characteristically, Freud repudiates much but revises little. Repetition as a compulsion is still a “daemonic power.” It is still abnormal. But it is so no longer because it *deviates* from the normal but because it *exceeds* it.

Beyond the Pleasure Principle can thus be considered a turning point in the development of Freud’s thought in that it presents a radical attempt to carry out the initial task of psychoanalysis, as set in *Studies on Hysteria*, an attempt at humanizing the being of the neurotics by problematizing being, and agency, as such. But at the descriptive level, which is the framework in which the theory of repression has been originally presented, the picture remains essentially unaltered; for that repetition is experienced from within has already been implied not only by the very notion of compulsion but also by the early observation that, “Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscence.” And even though repetition now has “its own” instinctual source, and it comes from *within* the ego, *that* which repeats, *that* which *returns*, is still the “unconscious repressed.” “The power of the repressed” manifests itself *in* the compulsion to repeat (BPP 20-1). The basic schema remains therefore the same. The patients still unintentionally repeat *because* they have intentionally repressed; and that which is repeated is still that which has been repressed—even though the content originally repressed manifests itself only indirectly, by way of conversion, through representations and symbolic objects.

This is why Deleuze, who considers the problematization of the compulsion to repeat and the discovery of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* a turning point in Freud's thought (DR 16), deems Freud's revision essentially insufficient. Drawing on Laplanche and Pontalis' reading of Freud in their seminal 1964 essay "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality" ("Fantasme originaire, fantasmes des origines, origine du fantasme"), and to some extent also on Derrida's interpretation in "Freud and the Scene of Writing" ("Freud et la scène de l'écriture"; 1967),⁶¹ Deleuze focuses in this regard on the paradoxical mechanism of deferred action (*Nachträglichkeit*), which is supposed to allow for the enigmatic transition from repression to repetition (124-5). Ultimately, according to Deleuze's critique of Freud in *Difference and Repetition*, Freud's shortcoming consists in the fact that in order to explain "how the former present [can] act at a distance upon the present one" (104), he is compelled to assume that there must be a "*thing* that is to be repeated" (103); and that this thing must be "provided" (ibid.) by the "former present," i.e., by repression, rather than, as Kierkegaard and Péguy would have it, by the present-to-come (94). "The former present," to which Deleuze also refers as "the present fact of having been wounded" (77), is "the one which provides the *thing* that is to be repeated, the one which conditions the whole process of repetition, and in this sense... remain[s] independent of it" (103). As Deleuze further contends (103-4):

As a consequence, repetition would in principle conform to the model of a material, bare and brute repetition, understood as the repetition of the same... Even—and above all—the Freudian conception of the death instinct, understood as a return to inanimate matter, remains inseparable from the positing of an ultimate term, the model of a material and bare repetition and the conflictual dualism between life and death.... The traditional theory of the compulsion to repeat in psychoanalysis remains essentially realist, materialist and subjective or individualist.

⁶¹ Deleuze cites both of these texts in *Difference and Repetition*, 318-19, nn. 27-28.

Deleuze realizes that Freud “was aware” of these problems and explains that this awareness is expressed in Freud’s “search for a more profound instance than that of repression” (105), that is, the search that has led Freud to develop the theory of “primal repression” (*Urverdrängung*) and the notion of the psychical mechanism of “anticathexis” (*Gegenbesetzung*), which are closely considered in the next chapter. But, for Deleuze, a more profound instance would not explain any better how the former present “provides the thing that is to be repeated.” Freud’s “search for a more profound instance than that of repression” is nothing but an aspect of his insistent “quest for origins” as described by Laplanche and Pontalis. For Deleuze, as for Laplanche and Pontalis, the problem with this Freudian quest is, for one thing, that it is biased and, for another, that it entails certain *presuppositions* that do not accord with the concepts that he himself develops; thus from a theoretical viewpoint, it is also an essentially futile quest. “Freud is in fact caught in the trap of his own concepts,”⁶² write Laplanche and Pontalis; he is a “prisoner of a series of theoretical alternatives, subject-object, constitution-event, internal-external, imaginary-real.”⁶³ These remarks add to Laplanche and Pontalis’ descriptions of Freud’s quest as a “pursuit of an ultimate truth,”⁶⁴ and as a “desire to reach the bedrock of the event.”⁶⁵ Laplanche and Pontalis claim that the “passionate conviction” motivating this quest is at odds with the direct implications of Freud’s own notion of fantasy, or psychical reality, which like the phenomenological *epoché*, entails the suspension of reality judgments.⁶⁶ The problem is that the quest for origins is

⁶² Laplanche and Pontalis, “Fantasy,” 18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 7. This applies in particular to the period following Freud’s repudiation of his seduction theory (i.e., the hypothesis that psychoneuroses originate in the childhood experience of being seduced by an adult, usually the father), famously communicated in a 1897 letter to Fliess (“I no longer believe in my

ultimately a quest for “the origin of the subject himself,”⁶⁷ and that, in the search for consistency and unifying principles among the fractures of the neurotic self, Freud turns fantasy into an object—into “the specific object of psychoanalysis.”⁶⁸ As Deleuze sees it, this is also the problem with “the traditional theory of the compulsion to repeat”; namely, that it “remains essentially realist, materialist and subjective or individualist” (DR 103-4)—and that it demands a “thing that is to be repeated,” a “transitional object” with which to “fill in the gaps” so as to regain self consistency.

But why is this a problem? It is because Freud’s quest does not only entail paradoxical presuppositions, but it is also essentially biased. It is biased because it focuses on origins (birth) rather than ends (death), and, more specifically, because it seeks explanations by way of employing a model of causality that organizes events from the past to the future along the sequence of a linear chain of now-moments. This is why Freud must supposedly assume that there is a “former present” that “provides the *thing* that is to be repeated.” The former present is the present of repression, but there must also be a “primal repression,” which precedes the repression that is analyzed in the clinic.⁶⁹ There must likewise be a primal fantasy, a myth, a prehistory, a phylogenetic heritage. Yet when it comes to the treatment in the clinic, the priority must be given to the history of the individual, to ontogeny over phylogeny, even if in both cases what is ultimately sought after is the “primal scene.” As Freud remarks in his analysis of the Wolfman case (1918 [1914]), “I regard it as a methodological error to seize on a phylogenetic

neurotica”). One of the reasons Freud mentions in the letter for this dramatic revision is his “insight” that “there are no indications of reality in the unconscious.” *Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm*, 264.

⁶⁷ Laplanche and Pontalis, “Fantasy,” 19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁹ Freud, “Repression” / GW 10: 250.

explanation before the ontogenetic possibilities have been exhausted.” [“ich halte es für methodisch unrichtig, zur Erklärung aus der Phylogenese zu greifen, ehe man die Möglichkeiten der Ontogenese erschöpft hat.”]⁷⁰

In view of the above, it can be seen that this bias originates in the common understanding of remembering as an intentional operation and of forgetting as an unintentional operation, and in the corresponding conception of forgetting as the automatic outcome of the failure to remember. When a person wonders why she has forgotten a certain thing, she will usually consider all the other things that she has remembered, all the things with which her mind has been occupied during the time in which she was failing to remember that other thing. As we have seen, in his treatment of hysterics Freud seems to offer a direct reversal of this common understanding. Conceiving of the patients’ behavior in terms of unintentional remembering, that is, in terms of compulsive repetitions, he investigates what they have been busy forgetting, i.e., the things that they have been intentionally repressing.

Deleuze wishes to overturn Platonism and Plato’s theory of reminiscence by radicalizing the notion of fantasy, “glorifying the reign of simulacra and reflections,” and “denying the primacy of original over copy, of model over image” (DR 66).⁷¹ In a similar manner, he also overturns Freudianism, and particularly Freud’s repression theory: “We do not repeat because we repress, we repress because we repeat” (DR 105). But what does this reversal mean? Obviously it cannot be understood as yet another direct reversal

⁷⁰ Sigmund Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918), SE 17: 97; *Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose*, GW 12: 131.

⁷¹ Here, too, the affinity with Derrida is worthy of note. As Derrida points out (*Dissemination* 138): “In general, [Plato’s notion of] *phantasma* (the copy of a copy) has been translated as ‘simulacrum.’” Reversing Plato in a manner similar to Deleuze’s “overturning of Platonism,” Derrida deems writing a perfect imitation, and, hence, “no longer imitation” (139). I discuss the notion of repetition as perfect authenticity in the context of Heidegger’s existential analytic in chapter 3.

of the common understanding of remembering and forgetting, for Deleuze's explicit objective in *Difference and Repetition* is to develop an unintuitive theory of time that rejects the authority of commonsense on this issue.⁷² "It matters little whether or not the event itself occurs, or whether the act has been performed or not: past, present and future are not distributed according to this empirical criterion" (DR 89). Following Bergson, and much like Heidegger, Deleuze is concerned with the rejection of the common understanding of time as a sequence of discrete and spatially representable "now-moments." The critique of Freud—which is spread throughout *Difference and Repetition* but mostly concentrated in the second chapter, "Repetition for Itself" (especially pp. 96-115)—is a crucial step in Deleuze's explication of his notion of the "third synthesis of time," the synthesis which "unites all the dimensions of time, past, present and future, and causes them to be played out in the pure form" (115).

Deleuze's suggestion that repression is the product of repetition should therefore not be understood according to the standard theory of causation. Rather the reasoning at work here seems to correspond with the logic of "always already" (*immer schon*), the logic that we find in Heidegger's conception of Dasein as always already determined, but also in Descartes' assertion of the primacy of the infinite over the finite in the Third Meditation,⁷³ and, more generally, in the theological doctrines of original sin and predestination. Repression, according to Deleuze, is always already repetition. "I do not repeat because I repress. I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat. I repress, because I can live certain things or certain experiences only in the mode of repetition. I

⁷² See especially chapter 3, on "The Image of Thought," DR 129-167.

⁷³ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 31: "my perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself."

am determined to repress whatever could prevent me from living them thus” (DR 18).

There is no origin that provides the thing that is to be repeated, “because the sole origin is difference.”⁷⁴ And there is no need for a “thing” that is to be repeated, for that which repeats is “difference in itself”; difference is not a “thing” and it does not “provide” anything.

(d) The Discovery of the Primacy of Anxiety over Repression in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*

In view of this brief reproduction of Deleuze’s critique of Freud in *Difference and Repetition*, we are already in a position to see an aspect of Freud’s repression theory that Deleuze does not take into consideration. For that which is repeated in Freudianism is not a “thing” or an “object,” in any simple sense of these words, but an emotional predisposition, namely anxiety.⁷⁵ The presupposition of anxiety is therefore different from the presupposition of an object or of the subject. As a presupposition of a disposition, it is formally a possibility of a possibility. It is true that Freud thought he had found the causes of the various neuroses in the phenomenon of repression, and that this etiological endeavor turned into an extensive, and, indeed, apparently obsessive search for the common origins of society and the human psyche. The consideration of repression as an intentional act is the point of departure of psychoanalysis, for it is only where there

⁷⁴ DR 125. Also in this context Deleuze refers to Derrida’s *différance* (DR 318 n. 28).

⁷⁵ To put it more precisely and in Spinozist terms, which I further develop elsewhere (“The Ontological Status of the Affects in Spinoza’s *Ethics*”): as an affect, anxiety is a confused rather than adequate idea; it is an affection of finite modes (human beings), rather than a direct affection of substance (hence, “God loves no one”); and thus, as an affect, anxiety is, properly speaking, a thing or an object, but rather than a finite or infinite mode, it is an *infinitesimal* mode. On the one hand, it is a “thing” in the same sense that God is a “thing,” that is, in the sense that they are both equally “in nature”—the only difference in this regard being that whereas anxiety, as any other mode, is in something else, God’s being in nature is a being that is perfectly in itself. On the other hand, unlike finite and infinite modes, anxiety is not a direct affection of substance (Spinoza’s God also does not hate anyone or suffer from anxiety or any other feeling), but only an affection of an affection, i.e., a second-order affection, of substance; and, as such, it is a “thing” in a different sense than human beings and other finite modes qualify as such. See conclusion.

is a possibility of intention that one looks for reasons and motivations. Pursuing this line of investigation, Freud was indeed suggesting that the structures of the psyche and society are primarily determined by repression, a view that resonates with Nietzsche's critique of morality through the tracing of its origins back to *ressentiment*, which like *Nachträglichkeit*, designates the ability to withhold a certain feeling (*sentir*) and have its effect or "discharge" postponed by a psychic mechanism of retention (or "sclerosis").⁷⁶ But Freud changed his mind precisely on this issue. It is not the identity of the subject who represses and repeats, or of an object which is being repeated, that is presupposed by Freud in a way that creates for him theoretical difficulties. For the subject is not a postulate but the very agenda of psychoanalysis. Freudianism does not involve a "reduction to the One," as Deleuze would go on to argue, together with Guattari, in the framework of their vehement critique of Freud in *A Thousand Plateaus*;⁷⁷ it involves an *induction into* the one. The all-encompassing status of the ego after the transition to the second topography shows that in spite of his extensive revisions and frequent repudiations of his theories, Freud never abandoned this original agenda, however philosophically problematic it might be; he only held on to it all the more firmly. Rather, that which appears as the presupposition of psychoanalysis is that which was always there in the analysis, "looming in the background" (ISA 100) but never directly tackled.

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, Freud promises his readers: "This time we will not lose sight of the part played by anxiety" (125). "What we clearly want," he repeats, "is to find something that will tell us what anxiety really is" (132). And pursuing

⁷⁶ See ch. 4 on "From Ressentiment to the Bad Conscience," in Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 111-146.

⁷⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 31.

this investigation in great urgency,⁷⁸ he realizes that, “It was anxiety which produced repression and not, as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety.” [“Hier macht die Angst die Verdrängung, nicht, wie ich früher gemeint habe, die Verdrängung die Angst.”]⁷⁹ Or more specifically, “It is always the ego’s attitude of anxiety [Angsteinstellung] which is the primary thing and which sets repression going. Anxiety never arises from repressed libido.” [“Immer ist dabei die Angsteinstellung des Ichs das Primäre und der Antrieb zur Verdrängung. Niemals geht die Angst aus der verdrängten Libido hervor.”] (109 / 138). Freud discovers that aside from “automatic anxiety,” which is the kind of anxiety that he has been describing in his studies all along, there is a kind of anxiety that operates as a “signal” of danger. While the former is involuntary and reactive, the latter is intentional and stands for itself (137-8). Already in the 1915 essay “The Unconscious,” Freud speaks of a primary phase of anxiety hysteria, which “is frequently overlooked” and which “consists in anxiety appearing without the subject knowing what he is afraid of.”⁸⁰ This kind of “free floating anxiety” (*freischwebende Angst*),⁸¹ anxiety that is not attached to any idea, is therefore not a new discovery for

⁷⁸ In “The Ego and the Id in Anxiety” (*The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 13 [1958]: 190), Max Schur, who was Freud’s physician, remarks that this

atmosphere of utmost urgency... was not only due to the pressure of new ideas and to the need for admission of past errors. In 1926 Freud was to become seventy. He had not yet fully adjusted himself to his cruel suffering [from oral cancer], nor did he have reason to believe that he would live thirteen more years. Hence, he had to write this book in a great hurry, as if he would try to say: Let me at least indicate all my new ideas, but also my doubts and uncertainties. This, and not the Rank dissension [concerning the trauma of birth], explains to me the urgency of this book.

⁷⁹ 108-9 / 137. As noted above, Freud repeats this argument in 1933: “It was not the repression that created the anxiety; the anxiety was there earlier; it was the anxiety that made the repression.” [“Nicht die Verdrängung schafft die Angst, sondern die Angst ist früher da, die Angst macht die Verdrängung!”]. Freud, “Anxiety and Instinctual Life,” SE 22: 86 / GW 15: 92.

⁸⁰ SE 14: 182.

⁸¹ Freud, “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” SE 17: 113 / GW 12: 148. Translated here according to Sigmund Freud, *The “Wolfman” and Other Cases*, trans. Louise Adey Huish (New York: Penguin, 2003), 311.

Freud. However, it is now no longer the repression of the libido that generates energy for the production of anxiety, nor can anything else be conceived of as the cause of this kind of anxiety in such economic terms, but rather, as in the cases of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, it is the nothing itself that “begets anxiety,” or, which amounts to the same thing, it is anxiety which is the cause of itself.

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, Freud “for the first time” presents us with another, rather obscure, psychical “defense technique,” a kind of repression and mechanism of symptom formation, namely the technique of “isolation” (*Isolieren*): “When something unpleasant has happened to the subject or when he himself has done something which has a significance for his neurosis, he interpolates an interval during which nothing further must happen—during which he must perceive nothing and do nothing.” [“nach einem unliebsamen Ereignis, ebenso nach einer im Sinne der Neurose bedeutsamen eigenen Tätigkeit, eine Pause eingeschoben wird, in der sich nichts mehr ereignen darf, keine Wahrnehmung gemacht und keine Aktion ausgeführt wird.”] (120 / 150-51). On the face of it, this “interpolation” of an “interval” can be understood in terms of deferred abreaction, a notion that is as old as psychoanalysis itself. But this isolation technique, unlike previous descriptions of repression, does not involve the conversion of the object of fear into substitutive symbolic objects; but rather it is time itself, time in its “pure form” as Deleuze calls it (DR 115), that is invested here by the subject as a defense strategy. In other words, it is *a pure time difference* which is at work in the generation of anxiety as signal—the nothing temporally conceived, a nothing that *endures*. Clearly, it is not the commonsense model of cause and effect that Freud employs here, nor is it the same model but in an inverse form, for it is the very undermining of the structure of this

model that is here at stake. If anxiety is prior to repression, then it is no longer the “former present” that provides the thing that is to be repeated, but it is anxiety that both manifests itself *through* repression and provides itself as the “thing” that is to be repeated.

Anxiety is thus revealed as the real presupposition of psychoanalysis. Once it is posited, it must be repeated. This is not a merely “abstract” philosophical statement but an idea that belongs to practical knowledge: the possibility of anxiety may generate anxiety regardless of extra-psychic circumstances and this process may go on forever through the operation of mechanisms of positive feedback loops. The question is why this process takes place at all. Freud’s theory of repression is, to a large extent, an attempt to provide a functional (curative) account of this phenomenon. Essentially, what is at stake here is the question of repetition, the question of the compulsion to repeat unpleasurable experiences, which lends itself to Freud’s meta-psychological speculations in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. When Freud gives primacy to anxiety over repression, he undermines the very foundation of his repression theory, for he puts in question the basic idea that repression should be analyzed as an intentional act. It is now the production of anxiety which posits itself, no less curiously than repression and forgetting, as an intentional act. But what kind of a subject performs this act? What kind of agency is implied in intentional anxiety (that is, in anxiety as signal)? What could be the motives for such an act? And how can one speak of a passion in term of action?

Freud addresses these questions, I would like to finally suggest, by way of a resort to phylogeny—indeed, by a preference for phylogenetic- over ontogenetic etiology. For he does not go as far as Kierkegaard so as to consider the very “appearance” of anxiety as

“the pivot upon which everything turns” (CA 43). In spite of the primacy of anxiety over repression, it is still fear, a necessarily object-related fear, a reaction to a real danger-situation, that Freud considers primary to anxiety in the order of causes. This real danger-situation in the life of the individual is the event of birth, which is more generally considered by Freud in terms of separation (ISA 131, 137). In principle, according to Freud, this traumatic event provides the model for all other sorts of anxiety, even to castration anxiety, which is nothing but a “fear of being separated from a highly valued object” (ISA 137). But Freud is also not willing to go as far as Otto Rank and claim that all neuroses are traceable back to the individual’s actual birth trauma.⁸² Deleuze considers it “strange” that after the discovery of Thanatos as a power different in kind from Eros, Freud still “refused any other dimension to death, any prototype or any presentation of death in the unconscious, even though he conceded the existence of such prototypes for birth and castration” (DR 111). In saying this, Deleuze points again to Freud’s biased focus on origins rather than ends in his inquiries. In apparent contrast to Heidegger, Freud indeed contends that death can only be experienced as the death of others, never as one’s own death⁸³—and he makes ample use of the method of free association to justify this claim (ISA 129-30):

But the unconscious seems to contain nothing that could give any content to our concept of the annihilation of life. Castration can be pictured on the basis of the daily experience of the faeces being separated from the body or on the basis of losing the mother’s breast at weaning. But nothing resembling death can ever have been experienced; or if it has, as in fainting, it has left no observable traces behind. I am

⁸² Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth* (New York: Dover, 1993); *Das Trauma der Geburt: Und seine Bedeutung für die Psychoanalyse* (Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924).

⁸³ Heidegger, however, employs a language of possibilities and impossibilities, which can be regarded as a Kierkegaardian heritage, which Freud does not possess. In fact, given the different nature of their projects, it could be said that not only is there no contradiction between them, but, in fact, *through* Freud, we can better understand the meaning of Dasein’s “ownmost” possibility of its impossibility.

therefore inclined to adhere to the view that the fear of death should be regarded as analogous to the fear of castration.

Freud insists on preserving the model of separation, a separation that is represented in the life of the individual through the event of birth, while altogether rejecting the idea that there is a part played by one's own death in the generation of anxiety. The reason for this is simply because death belongs to the future rather than the "former present." The "former present" remains the primary source of the neuroses, the source that "provides" the content for the formation of symptoms. In view of this insistence, Deleuze appears to be right when considering it "[a]ll the more strange that Freud [after having put so much emphasis precisely on birth in his own account] reproaches Rank for having a too objective conception of birth" (DR 318 n. 21). But Freud specifies the reason for his objection to Rank: "To lay so much stress... on the variability in the strength of the birth trauma is to leave no room for the legitimate claims of hereditary constitution as an aetiological factor" (ISA 151). What Freud suggests here is that only in the field of phylogenesis, i.e., through the investigation into the origins of culture, is the real fearful event, the efficient cause of the phenomenon of anxiety, to be found. Unlike repression, anxiety cannot be conceived of as an act, willful or not—for anxiety "is in the first place something that is felt" (ISA 132). It is an emotional disposition, a potentiality rather than actuality.⁸⁴ Unlike repression, which can always be ascribed to the internal psychic operations of the subject—however problematic such an ascription of agency may be—anxiety, for Freud, must have originally been induced from without—not only from without the subject in its becoming a unified individual in relation to its immediate environment, but also from without the entire immediate context in which the individual

⁸⁴ And yet Freud does not conceive of it as a possibility, as do Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

is situated. If repression is conditioned upon the subject's having already a certain "attitude of anxiety" (*Angsteinstellung*), then the very assumption of this attitude is an occurrence that does not belong to the history of the individual. Hence, despite Freud's proclamation that "the ego is the sole seat of anxiety" and that "the ego alone can produce and feel anxiety,"⁸⁵ all that we find in the ego is merely the "accidental" (ISA 151) manifestations of a primeval, essential sense of anxiety, which must originate in a real prehistorical event.

This brings us back to Kierkegaard and his argument that anxiety is the presupposition of original sin. As we have seen, Kierkegaard initially emphasizes the sense in which sin belongs to dogmatics: only dogmatics can explain sin and it does that by presupposing it. But though dogmatics explains the fact that sin came into the world, only psychology can explain how sin came into the world—i.e., the *transition* from innocence to sinfulness, the *mechanism* of becoming sinful—because the mood of psychology is that of "discovering anxiety" (unlike the mood of dogmatics, which is earnestness, or metaphysics, which is indifferent; CA 14-15), and anxiety is the intermediate term between innocence and sinfulness, and this is so, finally, because anxiety is ambiguous in relation to the question of guilt, because on the one hand, one is not guilty for *doing* something *out* of anxiety, since "anxiety is a foreign power," while on the other hand one is guilty for *being in* anxiety in the first place, and especially for loving it. "There is nothing in the world more ambiguous than that," Kierkegaard reasons, "therefore, this is the only psychological explanation" (CA 43).

That anxiety is a crucial psychological concept is confirmed by the development of modern psychopathology since Freud, and that this is directly related to the question of

⁸⁵ Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, SE 22: 85 / GW 15: 91.

guilt is famously confirmed in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929/30), where Freud traces the origins of bad conscience back to anxiety. But in what sense can anxiety be considered a *presupposition*? In what sense is it *specifically* a psychoanalytic, or psychopathological, presupposition?

Chapter 5: Anxiety as a Specific Psychoanalytic Presupposition

What are presuppositions? We sometimes call them “assumptions” or “presumptions” and sometimes “suppositions” without the prefix “pre.” But we usually mean the same thing. “Postulates,” “dogmas,” “axioms,” “premises,” “principles,” “hypotheses,” “conditions,” “theories”—all these words can be used to describe more or less the same thing. Let us nevertheless introduce, for heuristic purposes only, one difference that is not always clear. Let us say that presuppositions are different from suppositions in that presuppositions are implicit in the text, or in the theory, while suppositions are always made explicit in it. One makes suppositions consciously, but of the presuppositions that one makes, one is largely unaware.

Two qualifications are necessary here. First, this last statement does not necessarily mean that presuppositions are unconscious in the Freudian sense of the word, that is, in the sense of having been actively repressed. For inasmuch as they are indeed “excluded from consciousness,” this exclusion does not have to be attributed to active repression. It could just as well be attributed to the fact that they have, rather passively, been taken for granted—and thus never crossed the threshold of consciousness (remaining therefore not in the *unconscious* but in the *preconscious*). Admittedly, taking things for granted can be regarded as just another form of repression. But it is a form of repression that has been dealt with more extensively by Heidegger than by Freud and not according to the distinction between conscious and unconscious but precisely by way of rejecting this distinction.¹

¹ Cf. FCM §16.

Second, the reason why I have only “introduced” the distinction between presuppositions and suppositions, rather than presented it as a given fact, is because it is an artificial distinction. This is so for at least two reasons. For one thing, in both ordinary and technical discourse, the words “supposition” and “presupposition” are commonly used in an interchangeable manner. So that one may speak of “implicit suppositions” or “explicit presuppositions” and sound relatively coherent in both cases. For another, this distinction is never clear, neither in practice nor in theory. The distinction is thus artificial because it also always involves a degree of arbitrariness, unnaturalness—for otherwise it is impossible to determine where a theory begins or ends and what is implicit or explicit in it, and the same goes for any kind of practice.

The distinction between suppositions and presuppositions is therefore only a heuristic device. Using this device, I would like to demonstrate in this chapter that while Freud’s theory of repression, “the corner-stone of the whole structure of psychoanalysis,”² was introduced by him as a supposition, that is, an explicit theoretical assumption, the corresponding *presupposition* of Freud’s psychoanalytic psychology is anxiety. Freud himself confirms this when, in the fourth chapter of *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, he introduces major aspects of his revision of his theory of anxiety by way of reconsidering his former accounts of the anxiety hysteria cases of Little Hans and the Wolfman so as to arrive at the new, “unexpected” conclusion that in both cases, “It was anxiety which produced repression and not, as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety.”³

² Freud, “History,” SE 14: 16 / GW 10: 54.

³ ISA, SE 20: 108-9 / GW 14: 113-205. Cf. Freud, “Anxiety and Instinctual Life,” SE 22: 86 / GW 15: 92.

What Freud admits of here corresponds in principle with other important aspects of his revision of his theory of anxiety in that it appears as yet another instance of a more general return to common sense: first comes anxiety, then repression follows. If repression, or dissociation, is a defense mechanism, and anxiety is a signal of danger, then why not assume that the signal is prior to the defense? This ostensibly reasonable explanatory sequence, however, is precisely that which had to be ignored in Freud's initial theory of anxiety as transformed libido. For that which was supposed to generate the very process whereby libido is transformed into anxiety is repression⁴—a repressed longing for the mother in the case of Little Hans, a repressed loving of the father in the case of the Wolfman. That which was supposed is repression; that which was thereby presupposed is anxiety; and precisely because anxiety was presupposed rather than, like repression, explicitly supposed, it had to be considered as the effect of repression rather than as its cause.

(a) The Assumption of Repression

Freud makes ample use of the language of assumptions and presuppositions in his writing. The sexual aetiology of the neurosis, child and infantile sexuality, the unconscious, and many other major psychoanalytic “discoveries” are presented as suppositions or hypotheses whose validity is accordingly a factor of their explanatory force or even therapeutic effect. Thus in a short paper titled “Psycho-Analysis” (“Psycho-

⁴ Freud, “Anxiety,” 405:

The difficulty in understanding now lies elsewhere. The anxiety which signifies a flight of the ego from its libido is after all supposed to be derived from that libido itself. This is obscure and it reminds us not to forget that after all a person's libido is fundamentally something of his and cannot be contrasted with him as something external. It is the topographical dynamics of the generation of anxiety which are still obscure to us—the question of what mental energies are produced in that process and from what mental systems they derive.

Analysis”; 1926), Freud considers the theoretical status of his dynamic, economic, and topographical explanatory frames of reference stating that, “It must not be supposed that these very general ideas are presuppositions [*Voraussetzungen*] upon which the work of psycho-analysis depends. On the contrary, they are its latest conclusions and are ‘open to revision.’” [“Man darf nicht annehmen, daß diese allgemeinsten Vorstellungen die Voraussetzungen der psychoanalytischen Arbeit sind. Es sind vielmehr ihre spätesten Ergebnisse und der Revision unterworfen (*open to revision*).”]⁵ Every scientific thesis begins with a hypothesis, with certain assumptions that can be approved, disproved, or amended during the investigation. Stating that those of his assumptions that have not failed are his “latest conclusions,” Freud appears to give expression to the scientific spirit of psychoanalytic research in that he highlights its open-endedness and falsifiable nature. Theory in this regard is nothing but a set of suppositions. Presuppositions, however, are “there” before the theory “officially” begins. They may be discovered during the inquiry, but then, they can either be endorsed, in which case they would attain the status of a supposition, or else, they may be rejected to the effect of invalidating any aspect of the theory that rests upon them.

Freud’s statements that repression is the “corner-stone” of psychoanalysis and the “most essential part of it” are to be found in the first chapter of his 1914 paper “On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement” (“Zur Geschichte der psycho-analytischen Bewegung”).⁶ Freud repeats these statements in a paper published a decade later, titled “A Short Account of Psycho-Analysis” (“Kurzer Abriss der Psychoanalyse”), where he presents the psychoanalytic discovery of repression in the following way:

⁵ SE 20: 266 / GW 14: 303.

⁶ Freud, “History,” SE 14: 16 / GW 10: 54.

A consideration of the phenomena of resistance [*Widerstandsphänomene*] led to one of the corner-stones of the psycho-analytic theory of the neuroses—the theory of repression. It was plausible to suppose [*Es lag nahe anzunehmen*] that the same forces which were now struggling against the pathogenic material being made conscious had at an earlier time made the same efforts with success.⁷

Freud appears to present here not one but at least three suppositions: that (a) certain ideational content is actively barred from consciousness by the patient in the present (resistance); (b) ideational content was also actively excluded from consciousness by the patient in the past (repression); and (c) “the same forces” are involved in both of these mental activities. But it is also noticeable that while resistance is regarded here as the “phenomenon” that is to be explained, repression is presented as that which is supposed in order to explain it.

Apart from these general descriptions, Freud gives further considerably explicit indications as to the suppositional status of repression through the specific ways in which he utilizes this notion in his writing. Since it is in the nature of a supposition that it leads the theoretician into circular reasoning, especially once an explanation for the supposition itself is demanded, it is not surprising that the theory of repression was subjected to attacks precisely on such grounds. Such an attack, as Freud reports in “On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement,” was carried out by Adler during a meeting of the Vienna Society: “If you are asked where repression comes from, you are told, ‘from civilization’; but if you go on to ask where civilization comes from, you are told ‘from repression.’ So you see it is all simply playing with words.” But while Freud formulates his response to this objection in a manner that suggests a refutation of it, what he in effect does is to repeat it more sophisticatedly: “What is meant is simply that civilization is based on the repressions effected by former generations, and that each fresh generation is

⁷ SE 19: 196 / GW 13: 411.

required to maintain this civilization by effecting the same repressions.” Instead of denying that his theory of repression involves circularity, Freud only denies that this constitutes a problem for him, a denial that is made exceedingly evident by the remark that he subsequently makes in the same place to the effect of comparing Adler’s objection with that of a child who is frustrated by the explanation that eggs come from hens and hens from eggs.⁸

(b) The Assumption of Primal Repression

Freud appears to be likewise admmissive of circularity when in the metapsychological paper published a year later “Repression” (“Die Verdrängung”; 1915), he introduces the curious distinction between “primal repression” (*Urverdrängung*) and “repression proper” (*eigentliche Verdrängung*), “assuming” the former in order to explain the latter:⁹

We have reason to assume [*annehmen*] that there is a primal repression, a first phase of repression, which consists in the psychical (ideational) representative of the instinct being denied entrance into the conscious.

[Wir haben also Grund, eine Urverdrängung anzunehmen, eine erste Phase der Verdrängung, die darin besteht, daß der psychischen (Vorstellungs-) Repräsentanz des Triebes die Übernahme ins Bewußte versagt wird.]

Only in the next meta-psychological paper, on the unconscious, as we shall see in the next section, does Freud describe the psychical *mechanism* whereby this failure (*Versagen*) actually takes place, introducing to this end the notion of “anticathexis” (*Gegenbesetzung*). At this stage, the failure is merely presented as the *outcome* of primal repression, an outcome whose single most important aspect is the exclusion of an idea (*Vorstellung*) from consciousness. Primal repression is thus introduced not as an action

⁸ SE 14: 56-7 / GW 10: 101.

⁹ SE 14: 148 / GW 10: 250; “primal repression” deemphasized.

but as an occasion, the occasion on which the first exclusion of an idea from consciousness happens, but regardless of *how* it happens. As Freud explains later in the text, “The mechanism of a repression becomes accessible to us only by our deducing that mechanism from the *outcome* of repression.” [“Der Mechanismus einer Verdrängung wird uns nur zugänglich, wenn wir aus den Erfolgen der Verdrängung auf ihn zurückschließen.”]¹⁰ Freud appears to follow this procedure in that he begins with the outcome of primal repression, which is the establishment of a certain “fixation” (*Fixierung*) in the mind and the formation of the ideational content that was “primally repressed” (*das Urverdrängte*); and then proceeds to explicate, on the basis of this assumed outcome, the mechanism of “repression proper”.¹¹

The second stage of repression, repression proper [*eigentliche Verdrängung*], affects mental derivatives of the repressed representative, or such trains of thought as, originating elsewhere, have come into associative connection with it. On account of this connection, these ideas experience the same fate as what was primally repressed [*das Urverdrängte*]. Repression proper, therefore, is actually an after-pressure [*Nachdrängen*].

[Die zweite Stufe der Verdrängung, die eigentliche Verdrängung, betrifft psychische Abkömmlinge der verdrängten Repräsentanz, oder solche Gedankenzüge, die, anderswoher stammend, in assoziative Beziehung zu ihr geraten sind. Wegen dieser Beziehung erfahren diese Vorstellungen dasselbe Schicksal wie das Urverdrängte. Die eigentliche Verdrängung ist also ein Nachdrängen.]

We thus learn that repression proper is an “*after-pressure*,” i.e., that it is a kind of reaction rather than an original action, before we are told anything about the original source of pressure or the nature of the preceding action. “We have reason to assume that there is a *primal repression*,” Freud nonetheless says, because only under this assumption can repression proper be understood, i.e., can its *mechanism* be explained. For the ideas

¹⁰ SE 14: 154 / GW 10: 256.

¹¹ SE 14: 148 / GW 10: 250. Translation slightly amended (“connection” instead of association”); ‘repression proper’ deemphasized.

that are repressed in repression proper must be either the direct “psychical derivatives” (*psychische Abkömmlinge*) of, or some other ideational content that “has come into associative connection” (*assoziative Beziehung*) with, the “repressed representative” (*die verdrängte Repräsentanz*), i.e., the idea that *was* repressed. Hence, for repression proper to take place, there must be something that has already been repressed. And so, ultimately, there must also be something that was “primally” repressed, something that would exert its influence from the depth of the unconscious on ideas that are to be subsequently repressed, so that these ideas would “experience the same fate as what was primally repressed.”

Thus primal repression is assumed in order to explain repression proper. But repression proper, or “real” repression (*eigentliche Verdrängung*), which is more commonly referred to in Freud’s writings as simply “repression,” is nothing but the general kind of repression that has all along been the primary focus of psychoanalytic interpretation and treatment.¹² As such, repression proper is also the kind of repression that, as we have seen, was originally supposed by psychoanalysis in order to explain the phenomenon of resistance. The notion of primal repression is therefore introduced as an assumption which is supposed to explain yet another assumption, the assumption of repression proper. Thus while in “Short Account of Psycho-Analysis,” resistance is presented as the phenomenon that is to be explained while repression is considered as that which is supposed in order to explain it, here repression itself attains the dignity of a phenomenon and another instance of repression is introduced as that which is supposed to explain it.

¹² ISA 94: “As I have shown elsewhere, most of the repressions with which we have to deal in our therapeutic work are cases of *after*-pressure.”

In its effect, evidently, repression proper is nothing but a repetition of primal repression, a repetition, namely, of the failure due to which an idea is being excluded from consciousness. In its mechanism, however, repression proper differs from primal repression since its operation is complicated by the effects of previous repressions. In virtue of this complication, since it is precisely what accounts for the establishment of certain “connections” in the mind between that which *was* repressed and that which is *to be* repressed, the mechanism of repression proper is rendered explainable—unlike the mechanism of primal repression, which still remains obscure at this stage. But what is it precisely that we newly learn about the mechanism of repression once we take these hypothetical associative connections into account and regard them as a given fact?

Directly following the passage presenting the second stage of repression, repression proper, Freud makes a telling remark regarding the issue of mechanism¹³:

Moreover, it is a mistake to emphasize only the repulsion [*Abstoßung*] which operates from the direction of the conscious upon what is to be repressed; quite as important is the attraction [*Anziehung*] exercised by what was primally repressed upon everything with which it can establish a connection. Probably the trend towards repression would fail in its purpose if these two forces [*Kräfte*] did not cooperate, if there were not something previously repressed ready to receive what is repelled by the conscious.

[Man tut übrigens unrecht, wenn man nur die Abstoßung hervorhebt, die vom Bewußten her auf das zu Verdrängende wirkt. Es kommt ebensosehr die Anziehung in Betracht in welche das Urverdrängte auf alles ausübt, womit es sich in Verbindung setzen kann. Wahrscheinlich würde die Verdrängungstendenz ihre Absicht nicht erreichen, wenn diese Kräfte nicht zusammenwirkten, wenn es nicht ein vorher Verdrängtes gäbe, welches das vom Bewußten Abgestoßene aufzunehmen bereit wäre.]

This remark appears to imply that what we have newly learned about the mechanism of repression thanks to the hypothesis of primal repression is that it involves the operation of not only a force of “repulsion,” which operates “from the direction of the conscious”

¹³ SE 14: 148 / GW 10: 250-52.

so as to eject from it certain incongruent ideational content, but also a force of “attraction,” which is “exercised by what was primally repressed [*das Urverdrängte*] upon everything with which it can establish a connection,” and which is, accordingly, a force that both comes from the direction of, and is directed to, the system of the unconscious. Not only does repression involve two stages, it also involves two forces: repulsion and attraction. As we shall see, however, it is far from clear in what manner, if at all, these pairs of stages and forces correlate with each other. But before we address this complex problem in some detail, we should pause on the statement that opens the remark—namely, that “it is a mistake to emphasize only the repulsion [*Abstoßung*].” Presumably, the reason why the repulsion is overemphasized in the first place has something to do with the very use of the word “repression” (*Verdrängung*), which appears to imply that something is being excluded from consciousness due to conditions or constraints that are internal to this system. In view of this tendency to overemphasize the repulsion, Freud appears to tell us here that no less important in the process of repression is probably (*wahrscheinlich*) the force of attraction.

Now, the force of attraction, given that it is “exercised by what was primally repressed upon everything with which it can establish a connection,” is nothing but the dynamic aspect of the “mechanism” just described by Freud, whereby ideas are being excluded from consciousness during the stage of repression proper, i.e., the mechanism that Freud has just deduced from the supposed outcome of primal repression. But what then is precisely the nature of the force of repulsion? Does the suggestion that there is a tendency to overemphasize this aspect of repression imply that there is also a tendency to overlook it by taking it for granted?

With this question in mind, let us reconsider the last sentence in Freud's remark regarding the two forces: "Probably the trend towards repression would fail in its purpose if these two forces did not cooperate, if there were not something previously repressed ready to receive what is repelled by the conscious." The force of attraction is thus regarded by Freud as an *additional* force that is operative in the act of repression, a force which is *complementary* to the force of repulsion and which is therefore indispensable for the successful conclusion of the overall process of repression. Repression, in short, always involves the *co*-operation of the two forces. What then is the reason that the assumption of a single force, be it repulsion (whatever its mechanism may be) or attraction, appears insufficient in the eyes of Freud so that he feels compelled to assume the operation of another force that comes from the opposite direction?

Given that "before" primal repression there is no repressed ideational content that can exercise attraction on that which is to be repressed, there is apparently only one force that can be regarded as operative during this first stage of repression, repulsion. But then insofar as primal repression is an occasion on which an idea is being *successfully* excluded from consciousness, why not assume that a similar force of repulsion, whatever its nature or mechanism may be, is also that which generates all subsequent repressions? On the other hand, if we simply assume, regardless of how all this precisely happens, that primal repression has always already taken place and that the existence of the primally repressed can accordingly be taken as a "given fact," and if, on top of that, we accept the notion that it is in the capacity of repressed ideational content to exert attraction on ideas that are to be subsequently repressed, then why should we not further assume that such attraction is the *only* force that is involved in repression? Assuming that repression has

two phases, in short, why then should we also assume that it involves two forces? And to the extent that the two forces are needed for repression to happen, then how should we understand each stage individually?

While the introduction of the distinction between the two stages has left the mechanism of the first stage unexplained, the remark about the two forces implies that the first stage is technically impossible—that is, that it is not only hypothetical but also unreal. This remark also implies that repression proper involves not only attraction (in virtue of the primally repressed) but also repulsion (in virtue of some mechanism which is yet to be explained), for otherwise, as Freud says, “the trend toward repression would [probably] fail.” Yet we still know nothing about the mechanism whereby this force of repulsion actually operates, or about why we still have to assume that this force is at all operative in repression proper although the force of attraction is already available at this stage. For, in effect, the two forces are indistinguishable, just like the two stages. While the second stage entails a repetition of the first, i.e., a repetition of the exclusion of an idea from consciousness, the second force, i.e., the force of attraction (which is operative in virtue of *after*-pressure) is nothing but the mirror image of the first, inasmuch as the inclusion of an idea in the unconscious is merely the other aspect of its exclusion from consciousness. Thus to the repetition of the effect, there corresponds a doubling of the force. Each pair appears redundant in its own right, and the two of them appear to complicate each other in a manner that only accentuates the sense of redundancy. What then is the purpose of these hypothetical distinctions and this entire theoretical maneuver?

(c) The Assumption of Anticathexis

The procedure that Freud follows here, as we have seen, involves the inference from outcomes or effects (of repression) to mechanisms (of repression); the purpose of this procedure is to explicate the mechanism of repression; and the point of departure of this procedure is the effect of some previous repression, a previous repression that must therefore be assumed. In the metapsychological paper on repression, Freud makes this assumption explicit. Yet inasmuch as primal repression explains all subsequent repressions, the obscurity as to the mechanism of primal repression itself becomes increasingly obtrusive. And so Freud is led to investigate the mechanism of the outcome that he has both postulated and presented as a theoretical conclusion.

Thus in the next metapsychological paper, “The Unconscious” (“Das Unbewusste”; 1915), Freud introduces the notion of “anticathexis” (*Gegenbesetzung*), presenting it as yet another assumption, and declaring it to be “the sole mechanism of primal repression” (“der alleinige Mechanismus der Urverdrängung”).¹⁴ This “assumption of an anticathexis” (“Annahme einer Gegenbesetzung”)¹⁵ is supposed to explain the assumption of primal repression, but, in effect, it further complicates it in a manner that appears to obscure some inconsistencies. Anticathexis is defined by Freud in opposition to the withdrawal of cathexis (*Entziehung von Besetzung*), which is the process whereby consciousness is disengaged from an idea that has come to occupy it (*besetzen*). Since the disengagement must follow the occupation, the withdrawal of cathexis (*Besetzung*)¹⁶ is a

¹⁴ SE 14: 181 / GW 10: 280.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Besetzung* can more simply be translated as occupation or investment and as we shall see is often used by Freud interchangeably with libido, energy, quanta of excitation and other terms that designate magnitudes that may “transform” into anxiety.

process that can only take place after the idea has gained entrance into consciousness.¹⁷

The withdrawal of cathexis (or libido) is therefore a process that can only take place in repression proper. For in the case of primal repression, “we are dealing with an unconscious idea which has as yet received *no* cathexis from the *Pcs.* and therefore cannot have that cathexis withdrawn from it.”¹⁸ By means of anticathexis, an idea can be prevented from becoming cathected altogether. Hence, aside from the withdrawal of cathexis, repression proper must involve the operation of anticathexis, for otherwise, as Freud explains, all repression would be ineffective given that the immediate return of the repressed could never be prevented. Primal repression, by contrast, has a single mechanism, anticathexis. How does this mechanism precisely operate?

In the paper on repression, we have been told that the primally repressed (*das Urverdrängte*) exerts its influence over ideas that are to be subsequently repressed in virtue of their associative connection (*assoziative Beziehung*) with it. “On account of this connection, these ideas experience the same fate as what was primally repressed.”

[“Wegen dieser Beziehung erfahren diese Vorstellungen dasselbe Schicksal wie das Urverdrängte.”]¹⁹ While repression proper involves the operation of a *repulsive* force, primal repression is thus explicated as a process of *association*, which must correspondingly involve the operation of an *attractive* force. In short, on the basis of what Freud says in the paper on repression, we may be led to conclude that the

¹⁷ Or rather into “system *Pcs.*” (*System Vbw*), but for the moment we have to leave aside the distinction between the conscious and the preconscious, i.e., between that which is *actually* conscious and that which is merely *potentially* conscious and yet is not subject to the forces of repression. This distinction is of course of utmost significance especially in the context of my overall comparison between psychoanalysis and phenomenology (and between the concepts of intention and attention), but in keeping with the rudimentary fashion in which this distinction appears in Freud’s own theorizing, which mostly operates at the level of the conscious-unconscious dualism (i.e., at the level that is defined by repression as a binary differentiator), I consider here the conscious and preconscious systems coextensive.

¹⁸ SE 14: 181 / GW 10: 280.

¹⁹ SE 14: 148 / GW 10: 250; translation slightly amended: “connection” instead of “association.”

mechanism of primal repression is association, or, attraction (*Anziehung*). But if this is indeed the case, how then is the assumption of anticathexis supposed to explain primal repression, given that “before” primal repression there is supposedly no repressed ideational content that could exert attraction on that which is to be repressed? And if, again, we simply assume that primal repression has always already somehow taken place, then why should we not further assume that attraction, the force that can explain the effective and lasting exclusion from consciousness of both ideas that have gained entrance into it and ideas that merely attempt to do so, is the only force involved in repression? Indeed, repression itself, originally construed by Freud as the dissociation of consciousness, would thus be regarded as an act that is based on psychical mechanisms of association, i.e., the association of repressed ideational content with ideational content that is to be repressed.

Thus the assumption of anticathexis appears to explain either too little or too much. On the one hand, it does not explain primal repression, although this is explicitly one of the purposes for which Freud introduces this notion.²⁰ On the other hand, to the extent that the withdrawal of cathexis is to be understood, as opposed to anticathexis, as the operation of a repulsive rather than an attractive force, the assumption of anticathexis renders the assumption of the withdrawal of cathexis, which is nothing but the “mechanical” aspect of the assumption of repression proper, theoretically redundant. Finally, and perhaps most problematically, if the exercise of attractive forces and the corresponding psychical mechanism of association are indeed essential to the act of repression, then why use the word “repression” at all, which overemphasizes the

²⁰ SE 14: 181 / GW 10: 280.

involvement of repulsive forces and the dominance of dissociative mechanisms in the act?

But things look different upon closer examination of the wording of Freud's introduction of the notion of anticathexis in the paper on the unconscious (here with Strachey's clarifications in square brackets):

What we require, therefore, is another process which maintains the repression in the first case [i.e. the case of after-pressure] and, in the second [i.e. that of primal repression], ensures its being established as well as continued. This other process can only be found in the assumption of an *anticathexis*, by means of which the system *Pcs.* protects itself from the pressure upon it of the unconscious idea.

[Wir bedürfen also hier eines anderen Vorganges, welcher im ersten Falle die Verdrängung unterhält, im zweiten ihre Herstellung und Fortdauer besorgt, und können diesen nur in der Annahme einer Gegenbesetzung finden, durch welche sich das System Vbw gegen das Andrängen der unbewußten Vorstellung schützt.]²¹

Anticathexis is thus indeed presented as a process that can explain every stage and aspect of repression: the establishment (*Herstellung*) and continuation (*Fortdauer*) of primal repression, as well as the maintenance (*Unterhaltung*) of “after pressure” during the subsequent occurrences of repression proper. However, it is also clear from the text that Freud considers anticathexis an operation of system *Pcs.*, that is, an operation that comes from the direction of consciousness. It is the force “by means of which the system *Pcs.* protects itself from the pressure upon it of the unconscious idea.” In other words, Freud insists on his original idea that repression is at bottom a defense mechanism that functions as an operation of consciousness. Thus, at bottom, this defense mechanism is activated in virtue of a *repulsive force* that originates from the conscious side of the psyche. It therefore appears, on this reading at least, that Freud uses the term “anticathexis” (*Gegenbesetzung*) in order to designate the origin of this repulsive force.

²¹ Ibid.

The process of repression begins, therefore, with an act that adequately lends its name to the entire process. It is called “anticathexis,” and it is a process that involves the operation of repulsive forces. It is an act of dissociation, and as such it can indeed explain the occurrence of primal repression. The primally repressed is ideational content that had never been brought to the “attention” of had never “occupied” or “received cathexis” from the conscious or preconscious agencies. Yet this ideational content was denied entrance to the domain of conscious and preconscious thought *by* these agencies.

Anticathexis suddenly appears to be repression *par excellence*. It is a pure act of denial by means of which the subject avoids something of which she has never been aware, of which she could have never been aware. This “something” is the primally repressed. Anticathexis is accordingly the “sole mechanism” of primal repression, since this is the mechanism whereby primal repression happens. However, the mechanism whereby the primally repressed subsequently exert attraction (*Anziehung*) on that which is to be repressed is still that of the withdrawal of cathexis. The cathexis is withdrawn (*entzieht*) by the unconscious and in virtue of associative connections that were established between the repressed and that which is to be repressed. But at the same time, the same cathexis is also withdrawn on account of one’s conscious or preconscious mental operations and due to the original act of dissociation (anticathexis), which exerts its influence directly on the present situation by “deciding” which ideas are to be associated with the primally repressed and consequently “experience the same fate.”²²

²² SE 14: 185 / GW 10: 284: “It is the anticathexis that decides upon what portion of the instinctual representative the whole cathexis of the latter is able to be concentrated.” [“Die Gegenbesetzung ist es, welche die Auswahl trifft, auf welches Stück der Triebrepräsenz die ganze Besetzung derselben konzentriert werden darf.”]

The reason for the bewilderment lies in the appearance that the notion of anticathexis is introduced in the paper on the unconscious in a manner that is supposed to clarify a certain aspect of primal repression, i.e., the mechanism whereby it leads to subsequent repressions. However, anticathexis is not a mere aspect or implication of the assumption of primal repression; it is an additional assumption that Freud is compelled to make in order to support the assumption of primal repression. Whence comes the pressure to theorize in such a way? It can be seen that since “anticathexis” designates the ability to avoid something without being aware of it, it allows for the possibility of the activation of a defense mechanism regardless of any experience of fear. Anticathexis is the mechanism of primal repression, which is repression without anxiety (as signal) or “before” anxiety (as repressed libido).²³ It shows how far Freud was willing to go with the notion that the patients’ defense originates in action rather than reaction or passion. Or more specifically, It shows that in his insistence on the primacy of action in his study of the psychical neuroses, Freud actively ignored the commonsense explanation that repression, especially inasmuch as it is conceived of in terms of defense, is nothing but a reaction and a product of anxiety, and that, instead, he preferred to ascribe to his theory of repression a status akin to that of a dogma.

(d) Anxiety, Passion, Pain

Anxiety is therefore a psychoanalytic presupposition not only because it is an implicit assumption on which the entire edifice of psychoanalysis rests, but also because the assumption of action entails the presupposition of passion. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the reason why the theory of repression is the “corner stone” and “most

²³ SE 14: 182 / GW 10: 281.

essential part” of the structure of psychoanalysis is because it is designed to capture the active essence of the neuroses: their active origin as a defensive measure, their active manifestations in the forms of resistance and the transference, and the active role that the patients should assume in the therapeutic process of association and reintegration. This is why, upon presenting this corner stone of psychoanalysis as his own private invention,²⁴ Freud sets it in direct opposition to hypnosis and the assumption of passivity that is involved in hypnosis, as a way of treatment and as a way of conceptualizing the conditions under which the pathogenic element is acquired: “the history of psychoanalysis proper, therefore, only begins with the new technique that dispenses with hypnosis.” [“darum setzt die Geschichte der eigentlichen Psychoanalyse erst mit der technischen Neuerung des Verzichts auf die Hypnose ein.”]²⁵ Thus Freud renounces the thesis of “hypnoid states,” deeming it “superfluous and misleading” and attributes it to Breuer alone;²⁶ and already in *Studies on Hysteria* (286 / 290) he claims that, rather than the existence of a hypnoid state, the “primary factor [determining the illness] is defence.”

This is the well-known and official story told by Freud himself.²⁷ But there is an aspect to this story that is not part of the official narrative. The emphasis on action is also

²⁴ SE 14: 15 / GW 10: 53:

The theory of repression quite certainly came to me independently of any other source; I know of no outside impression which might have suggested it to me, and for a long time I imagined it to be entirely original, until Otto Rank (1911a) showed us a passage in Schopenhauer’s *World as Will and Idea* in which the philosopher seeks to give an explanation of insanity.

[In der Lehre von der Verdrängung war ich sicherlich selbständig, ich weiß von keiner Beeinflussung, die mich in ihre Nähe gebracht hätte, und ich hielt diese Idee auch lange Zeit für eine originelle, bis uns O. Rank die Stelle in Schopenhauers “Welt als Wille und Vorstellung” zeigte, in welcher sich der Philosoph um eine Erklärung des Wahnsinnes bemüht.]

²⁵ SE 14: 16 / GW 10: 54

²⁶ Sigmund Freud, “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria (1905 [1901]),” SE 7, n. 1: 27; “Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse,” GW 5: 185 n. 1.

²⁷ Cf. also Sigmund Freud, “Two Encyclopedia Articles” (1923 [1921]), SE 18: 237; “‘Psychoanalyse’ und ‘Libidotheorie,’” GW 13: 213:

the reason why anxiety was initially relegated to the realm of the “auxiliary aetiology” (*Hilfsätiologie*) of the “actual neuroses” (*Aktualneurose*),²⁸ and so regarded as a phenomenon that in its pathological manifestations is not a matter of psychic defense, but of purely somatic processes.²⁹ So that when Breuer and Freud considered hysteria a “traumatic neurosis” in their “Preliminary Communication,” they equated the traumatic event with the “affect of fright” (“Schreck-affekt”; *Studies* 6 / 84). But when Freud wanted to explain anxiety itself in that period, he had to speak of it not as a “hysterical symptom,” which are belated effects that involve the operation of a psychic mechanism (dissociation, repression) whose purpose is defense (*Abwehr*), but as an actual neurosis. Hysteria is one of the “neuropsychoses of defense”.³⁰

For the events and influences which lie at the root of every psychoneurosis belong, not to the present day [*Aktualität*], but to an epoch of life which is long past and which is, as it were, a prehistoric one—to the time of early childhood; and that is why the patient, too, knows nothing of them.

[Die Ereignisse und Einwirkungen nämlich, welche jeder Psychoneurose zugrunde liegen, gehören nicht der Aktualität an, sondern einer längst vergangenen, sozusagen prähistorischen Lebensperiode, der frühen Kindheit, und darum sind sie auch dem Kranken nicht bekannt. Er hat sie—in einem bestimmten Sinne nur—vergessen.]

Contrasts between the views of the two authors had been visible even in the *Studies*. Breuer supposed that the pathogenic ideas produced their traumatic effect because they arose during ‘hypnoid states,’ in which mental functioning was subject to special limitations. The present writer rejected this explanation and inclined to the belief that an idea became pathogenic if its content was in opposition to the predominant trend of the subject’s mental life so that it provoked him into ‘defence.’

[Schon in den “Studien” hatten sich Gegensätze in den Auffassungen der beiden Autoren angezeigt. Breuer nahm an, daß die pathogenen Vorstellungen darum traumatische Wirkung äußern, weil sie in “hypnoiden Zuständen” entstanden sind, in denen die seelische Leistung besonderen Einschränkungen unterliegt. Referent lehnte diese Erklärung ab und glaubte zu erkennen, daß eine Vorstellung dann pathogen wird, wenn ihr Inhalt den herrschenden Tendenzen des Seelenlebens widerstrebt, so daß sie die “Abwehr” des Individuums hervorruft.]

²⁸ See Sigmund Freud, “Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses” (1898), SE 3: 279; “Die Sexualität in der Ätiologie der Neurosen,” GW 1: 509.

²⁹ That is, until Freud’s debate with Stekel in 1907 and the subsequent introduction of the clinical entity of “anxiety hysteria.”

³⁰ Freud, “Sexuality,” SE 3: 267-68 / GW 1: 497.

The “actual neuroses” are thus “actual” (*aktual*) in the same sense in which they can also be considered automatic; that is, in the sense that they happen immediately, i.e., without the mediation of the psyche. When Freud initially investigated the passion of anxiety, he treated it as something that is always already actual: “the source of the anxiety is not to be looked for in the psychical sphere. It must accordingly lie in the physical sphere: it is a physical factor in sexual life that produces anxiety.” [“die Quelle der Angst nicht im Psychischen zu suchen ist. Demnach liegt sie im Physischen, es ist ein physisches Moment des Sexuallebens, was Angst erzeugt.”]³¹ And even when Freud concedes that the “mixture” of actual neuroses and psychoneuroses is in fact “very frequent,” he still insists:³²

When confronted with a mixture of this kind, we shall nevertheless not be wise to give up separating out the clinical pictures proper to each neurotic illness; for after all it is not difficult to explain the case to oneself in the following manner. The predominant place taken by the anxiety neurosis shows that the illness has come into being under the aetiological influence of an ‘actual’ sexual noxa.

[Man tut nicht gut, angesichts einer solchen Vermengung etwa auf eine Sonderung der einzelnen neurotischen Krankheitsbilder zu verzichten, da es doch nicht schwer ist, sich den Fall in folgender Weise zurechtzulegen: Wie die vorwiegende Ausbildung der Angstneurose beweist, ist hier die Erkrankung unter dem ätiologischen Einfluß einer aktuellen sexuellen Schädlichkeit entstanden.]

Freud insists on explaining anxiety as an outcome of processes that originate in the “physical sphere” due to his conviction that the main problem of psychoanalysis is to show how anxiety is generated due to internal rather than external excitations. When Breuer and Freud consider hysteria a traumatic neurosis, as we have seen in the previous chapter, they distinguish between inherited (“dispositional”) hysteria and acquired hysteria, postulating that only in the latter case should the origin of the trauma be

³¹ Freud, “How Anxiety Originates,” 190 / 99.

³² Freud, “Sexuality,” SE 3: 279 / GW 1: 509.

ascribed to an external event in the patient's life. The qualification of hysteria as acquired (*akquiriert*) is also that which enables them to consider this particular case curable. The anxiety of hysteria and of the other neuropsychoses of defense is accordingly normal anxiety, that is, nothing but fear, a reaction, though belated, to a real situation of danger. Hence, what is left to be explained is only the case of anxiety neurosis, which involves neither external danger nor the operation of a psychic mechanism of defense. Since the origin of this anxiety is to be found neither in the psyche nor in the environment, the body is the only place in which it can be found; and though distinguished from the soul, the body is considered by Freud an internal source of excitation.

Emphasizing the sexual origins of anxiety neurosis, Freud mainly focuses on sexual frustration during marriage, practices of abstinence, and the use of contraceptive measures such as *coitus interruptus*. His original contention is that anxiety is the product of “an accumulation of physical sexual tension” (“Anhäufung physischer sexueller Spannung”), a tension whose discharge (*Abfuhr*) is for some reason prevented.³³ In both hysteria and anxiety neurosis, there is a “damming-up” (*Stauung*) aspect, but only with respect to anxiety neurosis does Freud speak of the “transformation” (*Verwandlung*) of accumulated sexual tension into anxiety.³⁴

In order to account for the transformation of physical excitation into anxiety, Freud postulates a mechanism whereby physical sexual tension “arouses psychical libido” (*psychische Libido*). This, as Strachey notes, is the first known occurrence of the term libido in Freud's writings. It is to be found in Draft E of the Fliess papers, which is dated from 1894, and in which Freud goes on to explain that the physical sexual tension is

³³ Freud, “How Anxiety Originates,” 191 / 100; emphases omitted.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 191ff. / 100ff.

transformed into anxiety if for some reason the accumulation of the tension is not accompanied by the arousal of psychological libido, that is, if the physical tension cannot be “psychically bound” (*psychisch gebunden*) so as to generate a complete “physicopsychical tension” (*physisch-psychische Spannung*), to which Freud also refers as “sexual affect” (*Sexualaffekt*).³⁵

This is where the familiar formula of anxiety as transformed libido originates. The important point for us to see here is that the theory of anxiety as transformed libido has nothing to do with fear or reaction to danger. In fact, Freud even takes care to consider the possibility of understanding the sexual origins of anxiety in terms of fears that are obviously involved in the use of defense measures against pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases—only in order to reject this possibility on the grounds that there are many cases of chronic anxiety in which such worries do not appear to play any role.³⁶ Anxiety is merely the byproduct of the failure to properly actualize a certain potential. It is how one’s libido feels like when it has, so to speak, “gone bad,” having been left unemployed. Libido, as Freud will later explain, turns into anxiety just as wine becomes vinegar.³⁷

It is evident that this description is also applicable to the case of boredom. And indeed, when Otto Fenichel describes boredom in his 1934 attempt to provide a systematic psychoanalytic account of this phenomenon, he considers it precisely in terms

³⁵ Ibid., 193 / 101.

³⁶ Ibid., 190 / 99. Noticeably, Freud also does not consider in this short text the fear of prohibition, which is traditionally associated with sexuality, as a possible source of the anxiety; in fact, what he proposes suggests a direct reversal of this rationale: rather than the prohibition that is associated with the sexual act, it is the non-actualization of sexuality (or the inability to complete the sexual act) which produces fear.

³⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), SE 7: 224, n. 1; text added by Freud in 1920.

of the “damming up” of libido, or drive (*Libido-* or *Triebstauung*).³⁸ But what is telling about Fenichel’s account is perhaps first and foremost its rarity, the marginality of its theme in the intellectual history of psychoanalysis, which, on the one hand, reflects the more general rarity and marginality of boredom in the discourse of psychopathology, and, on the other hand, accentuates the ubiquity and centrality of anxiety in this same discourse. There are reasons why it had to be anxiety rather than boredom. One of them, as I have sought to show, has something to do with the persistence of the notion of guilt in psychoanalysis, a persistence which becomes increasingly explicit in Freud’s writing and makes its full appearance in the *Ego and The Id*, where the problem of unconscious sense of guilt is presented as the main reason for the transition to the second topography. But this reason is intrinsically related to yet another reason for the psychopathological preference of anxiety over boredom. The notion of guilt is already implicit in the very distinction between potentiality and actuality, as well as in the related ideas: that a potential is something that can be accumulated, and that there is a certain way in which it can be *properly* “discharged” or actualized. This assumption goes hand in hand with the premise of Freud’s economic explanatory framework, to which he refers in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (55-56 / 60), following Barbara Low, as the “nirvana principle” (*Nirwanaprinzip*), and which he defines there as the idea that “[t]he dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli [*inneren Reizspannung*].” What follows from all these assumptions is that unpleasure can only be understood as an

³⁸ Fenichel, “Psychology of Boredom.”

outcome of overstimulation rather than under-stimulation.³⁹ The threat is always that of being exposed to an excessive amount of stimuli, and the main question is always whether the source of the stimuli is internal or external. In its own right, however, under-stimulation is not a psychopathological problem, even though it may become one if it leads to overstimulation.⁴⁰ Likewise, in its own right, boredom does not fully qualify as a passion in psychoanalytic psychopathology and, by extension, in psychopathology in general.

Yet the theory of anxiety as transformed libido, as originally conceived by Freud, involves no threat, no danger, and, therefore, no defense. The excessive amount of stimuli is not a threat but the very substance of which the fear is made. Anxiety *is* transformed libido; it is not fear *in the face of* a potential or actual transformation of libido. Any attempt to explain such anxiety as a measure of defense or signal of danger is clearly doomed to failure inasmuch as the danger must precede the signal and the signal must precede the activation of the defense mechanism.

³⁹ This should be contrasted with Breuer, who discusses the “torment of boredom” due to “[l]ack of sensory stimuli,” utilizing in this context the notion of “tonic excitation,” the distinction between “‘free’ and ‘bound’ forms of psychical energy,” and “the allied distinction between the primary and secondary systems of psychical functioning.” See *Studies*, 193, 194 n.1, 197.

⁴⁰ Except perhaps for the under-stimulation that is involved in the boredom of the “rest cure,” which Freud thought to address directly by means of the “talking cure” (*Studies* 267 / 266):

I have adopted the habit of combining cathartic psychotherapy with a rest-cure which can, if need be, be extended into a complete treatment of feeding-up on Weir Mitchell lines. This gives me the advantage of being able on the one hand to avoid the very disturbing introduction of new psychical impressions during a psychotherapy, and on the other hand to remove the boredom of a rest-cure, in which the patients not infrequently fall into the habit of harmful day-dreaming.

[Ich habe mich ferner daran gewöhnt, die Anwendung der kathartischen Psychotherapie mit einer Liegekur zu verbinden, die nach Bedürfnis zur vollen Weir-Mitchellschen Mastkur ausgestaltet wird. Ich habe dabei den Vorteil, daß ich so einerseits die während einer Psychotherapie sehr störende Einmischung neuer psychischer Eindrücke vermeide, anderseits die Langweile der Mastkur, in der die Kranken nicht selten in ein schädliches Träumen verfallen, ausschließe.]

For Freud’s discussion of Weir Mitchell’s rest cure, see also his early essay “Hysteria” (1888), SE 1: 55.

Freud gradually abandoned the distinction between the actual neuroses and the neuropsychoses of defense as the pressure to utilize the concept of anxiety in the context of the latter category grew. In 1898, as we have seen, he already talked about the “mixture” (*Vermengung*) of actual neuroses and psychoneurosis.⁴¹ In 1907, comparing the obsessional neuroses (which involve psychic defense) with religious practices, he admitted that chronic anxiety played a significant role in both cases.⁴² In the next year, following a debate with Wilhelm Stekel about this issue, he conceded that anxiety should be used as a diagnostic category of psychic neuroses and introduced to this end the clinical entity of “anxiety hysteria.”⁴³ A year later appeared the case history of Little Hans, in which this clinical entity took center stage.⁴⁴ And in a 1910 essay titled “Wild Psycho-Analysis” (“Über ‘wilde’ Psychoanalyse”), Freud already chided a certain practitioner for recommending sexual activity to a patient suffering from anxiety on the basis, as Freud explains, of a too-narrow construal of his early theories regarding the sexual aetiology of anxiety neurosis—even though this in fact seems like a rather reasonable conclusion to draw from Freud’s writings on the topic in the 1890s.⁴⁵ Thus the theory of anxiety as (somatically, automatically) *transformed* libido turned into a theory of anxiety as (psychically) *repressed* libido.

The theory of anxiety as repressed libido remained similar nonetheless to the theory of anxiety as transformed libido in that at bottom it was not a specific theory of anxiety

⁴¹ “Sexuality,” SE 3: 279 / GW 1: 509.

⁴² Freud, “Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices,” SE 9: 115-128, GW 7: 129-39.

⁴³ The notion of anxiety hysteria first occurs in Sigmund Freud, “Preface to Wilhelm Stekel’s *Nervous Anxiety-States and Their Treatment*” (1908), SE 9: 250-51. On the debate between Freud and Stekel, see Makari, *Revolution*, 156 – 61.

⁴⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy* (1909), SE 10: 1-150; *Analyse der Phobie eines fünfjährigen Knaben*, GW 7: 243-377.

⁴⁵ SE 11: 219-28; GW 8: 118-25.

but a general affect theory.⁴⁶ For under the constraints that Freud had imposed upon his theorizing by utilizing his economic-physiological explanatory framework, all affects had to be reducible to “quanta of excitation,” which meant that their specific *qualia* had to be suppressed, even lost, in the process of their theorization. Under such constraints, anxiety was rendered indistinguishable from any other affect and, even more problematically, it was indistinguishable from unpleasure in general. This conflation, whereby all negative affects were lumped together under the single rubric of anxiety, is evident in the largely interchangeable use that Freud made in this theoretical context of the notions of affect, energy, quanta of excitation, libido, affective or instinctual impulse, and later, libidinal cathexis, or simply cathexis, as well as of the “discharge” of each of these magnitudes. As Freud writes in his analysis of Little Hans: “When once a state of anxiety establishes itself, the anxiety *devours* [*zehrt*] all other feelings.” And as he further explains in the same place: “with the progress of repression, and the more these ideas which are charged with affect and which have been conscious move down into the unconscious, all affects are capable of being changed into anxiety.”⁴⁷

But while the theory of anxiety as transformed, or repressed, libido describes anxiety as an instance of an expenditure of psychic energy—which seems reasonable enough—it says nothing about why this energetic expenditure should be considered in terms of anxiety; that is, it says nothing about the distinctive emotional “color” of anxiety.

⁴⁶ See following works by Alan Compton: “A study of the Psychoanalytic Theory of anxiety I: The development of Freud’s theory of anxiety,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 20, no. 1 (1972): 3-44; “A Study of the Psychoanalytic Theory of Anxiety II: Developments in the Theory of Anxiety Since 1926,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 20, no. 2 (1972): 341-394; “A Study of the Psychoanalytic Theory of Anxiety III: A Preliminary Formulation of the Anxiety Response,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 28 (1980): 739-773; and “The Psychoanalytic View of Phobias—Part IV: General Theory of Phobias and Anxiety,” *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 61 (1992): 426-446.

⁴⁷ SE 10: 35 / GW 7: 270.

Freud wanted to address precisely this shortcoming in the twenty fifth lecture of his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, “Anxiety” (“Die Angst”), by way of modeling neurotic anxiety after normal anxiety.⁴⁸ “Where there is anxiety,” he stated, “there must be something that one is afraid of.” [“wo Angst ist, muß auch etwas vorhanden sein, vor dem man sich ängstigt.”]⁴⁹ This is the first time that Freud systematically analyzes the phenomenon of anxiety while considering it in its own right, rather than a mere byproduct of some psychic or somatic processes. That the attempt to model neurotic anxiety after normal anxiety fails, however, is admitted already in the lecture by Freud himself, who now makes the observation that in order to explain neurotic anxiety in economic terms and as repressed libido, one must assume that that which is repressed, i.e., libido, is also that of which one is afraid and due to which the libido was repressed in the first place; in other words, that in order explain anxiety, it must be presupposed.

Inasmuch as the theory of anxiety as repressed libido fails to establish a link between neurotic anxiety and fear, which is what Freud really shows in his 1917 lecture on anxiety, this theory makes explicit the psychoanalytic presupposition that anxiety is the most fundamental form of psychic pain. While there are various potentially pleasurable affects, if this potential is, due to repression, not actualized, it all uniformly turns into this generic kind of pain that is called anxiety. Freud never considers the alternative possibility, that unemployed libido turns into boredom, which indeed has nothing to do with fear and which is more commonly associated with unconsummated excitations. Freud has essential difficulties with his theory of anxiety as repressed libido, but instead of trying to better understand the feelings that accompany or ensue from the repression of

⁴⁸ SE 16: 392-411 / GW 11: 407-426.

⁴⁹ SE 16: 401 / GW 11: 416.

libido, he seeks to develop a better theory that would explain what anxiety as such is, regardless of the repression of the libido and even regardless of the distinction between the normal and the pathological.

To this end, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, published a decade following the lecture, Freud revises his theory of anxiety, explaining it now no longer as a product of repressed libido and thus a generic form of mental pain but, much more intuitively and specifically, as a signal announcing a situation of danger. All anxiety, accordingly, however neurotic or psychotic it may appear to be, has to be qualified from now on as realistic. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, it can therefore be said, marks a return to common sense. Since all anxiety is now realistic and serves as a signal of danger, neurotic anxiety has to be regarded as the cause rather than effect of repression. And thus, revising his analyses of the anxiety hysteria cases of Little Hans and the Wolfman, Freud arrives at the new conclusion that, “It was anxiety which produced repression and not, as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety.” While anxiety that is leading to repression may sound like a rather logical causal sequence, for Freud this is an “unexpected finding” (*unerwartetes Ergebnis*; 108 / 137). Indeed, this finding is more than unexpected. It runs counter to the premise on which psychoanalysis has in the first place established itself as a method of treatment and interpretation that first and foremost dispenses with hypnotism, that is, to the idea that the patients should be treated as agents and that passion or pathology should be understood by tracing its origins to some sort of an action.

The most fundamental action in psychoanalysis has always been repression, which, conscious or not, has always been qualified by Freud as intentional and purposeful. “The

hysterical patient's 'not knowing' was in fact a 'not *wanting* to know—a not wanting which might be to a greater or less extent conscious.'" ["Das Nichtwissen der Hysterischen war also eigentlich ein—mehr oder minder bewußtes—Nichtwissenwollen."'] (*Studies* 169 / 269). Only where there is a possibility for action can there be intention, and only where there is intention is there material for interpretation. Even when confronted with the task of explaining repression itself, Freud refrains from using the concept of anxiety and instead comes up with the highly hypothetical notion of "primal repression," which represents the psychic operation of "anti-cathexis," which, in turn, conditions the possibility of every subsequent repression. Thus at the psychological level, repression can only be explained by repression itself.

By stating in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* that anxiety is *prior* to repression, that what *produces* repression is in fact passion rather than action, Freud puts into question the special status of the theory of repression as the "corner stone" of psychoanalysis, as well as the very rationale that has stood behind the psychoanalytic method's claim for therapeutic efficacy. Having repeatedly presented the theory of repression as the most important and basic assumption of psychoanalysis, Freud now confirmed that implicit in this assumption has all along been the presupposition of anxiety.

Conclusion

This dissertation examines the difference between boredom and anxiety by interpreting the works of Sigmund Freud and Martin Heidegger, two very different thinkers for whom the differentiation from the religious tradition was a major concern, both personally and theoretically. On the basis of this interpretation, I present the hypothesis that there has been a transition from anxiety to boredom in late modernity, and that this transition is to be understood as the emotional aspect of the history of secularization. While this is a broad hypothesis, this dissertation is restricted in that it only considers (a) the conceptual differences between anxiety and boredom, (b) what it would mean to say that there has been a historical transition from the one to the other, and (c) how this claim can be examined and validated. My conclusions, correspondingly, are (1) that at the most fundamental level the difference between anxiety and boredom is fear, (2) that at least one implication of the transition from anxiety to boredom is the bifurcation of religious anxiety into normal boredom and pathological anxiety, and (3) that this can be seen in the phenomenon of the expansion of boredom in ordinary speech in late modernity on the one hand, and, on the other hand, in the parallel phenomenon of the proliferation of anxiety in psychopathological discourse.

While each of these phenomena has been widely documented, the relation between them, the history of the emotional difference between anxiety and boredom, has not been studied as yet. My suggestion is that the two processes are in fact complementary. Just like production and consumption, which are complementary manifestations of capitalism, anxiety and boredom are complementary manifestations of secularization. The failure to see this is ascribable, in part, to the failure to consistently

recognize the difference between anxiety and boredom and, in part, to the correspondence of this difference with the logic by which the fields in which these phenomena are being studied have been formed and differentiated. From a historical viewpoint, my claim is still only hypothetical, but I argue that it can be empirically validated on the basis of a systematic genealogical study, heretofore not attempted, of anxiety and its disorders in light of the phenomenon of the expansion of boredom in late modernity. From this viewpoint, this dissertation should be seen as a prolegomenon to such a study.

From a theoretical viewpoint, this dissertation presents the thesis that the difference between anxiety and boredom is fear, and that this emotional difference manifests itself, on the ethical level, in either the presence or absence of a sense of guilt, and, on the theological level, in the regard or disregard of the possibility of sin. From this viewpoint, secularization has meant, progressively: (a) the conceptualization of sin as an “existential determination” (Kierkegaard, *Postscript*; 1846), (b) the use of the notion of guilt in disregard of the actuality of sin (Freud), (c) the use of the notion guilt in disregard of the possibility of sin (Heidegger, *Being and Time*; 1927), and (d) the use of the notion of anxiety in disregard of guilt, which, I argue, is that which yields the concept of boredom in Heidegger’s 1929/30 lecture course “The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics.”

The first part of this dissertation examines the shift of focus in Heidegger’s work from anxiety to boredom after *Being and Time* in an attempt to work out the essential differences between these moods. The second part examines the ubiquity of anxiety in psychoanalysis in view of the absence of boredom in this field in order to work out some of the concrete implications of the historical transition from anxiety to boredom. Both

Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics and Freud's psychoanalysis are regarded here as projects of secularization. By way of conclusion, I would like to present the main differences between these projects, and to suggest another sense in which the former is a radicalization of the latter, taking the lead once again from Kierkegaard's argument in *The Concept of Anxiety*.

In *The Concept of Anxiety*, as we have seen in chapter 2, Kierkegaard reminds us that sin can only be explained by being presupposed, which is what makes it primarily a subject for dogmatic deliberation. But Kierkegaard's own deliberation on the dogma of original sin goes beyond, or rather "under," dogmatics in that it is "psychologically orienting." What makes it psychologically orienting is the less intuitive claim that Kierkegaard makes: that the very presupposition of sin is that through which the concept of anxiety is to be understood. Kierkegaard goes so far as to suggest that the concept of anxiety itself is to be understood as the presupposition of original sin (25-51). Thus while sin is the presupposition of sin on the dogmatic level, anxiety is the presupposition of sin on the psychological level. While dogmatics explains the fact that sin came into the world, that is, the "qualitative leap" of the fall (48), it is only in the mood of psychological observation, which is the mood of "discovering anxiety" and of "portraying" it while being "in anxiety" over these very portrayals (CA 15), that one can explain *how* sin came into the world, that is, the mechanism of the transition from innocence to sinfulness. Thus anxiety is not the presupposition of sin in the same sense in which sin, as explained by dogmatics, is the presupposition of sin: anxiety is the presupposition of sin not as a dogma, but as a psychological concept. While in dogmatics, a dogma is something that *must* be presupposed, in psychology, presumably, such

constraints do not apply. Does this mean that anxiety does not *have* to be presupposed, that is, that we can either explain it without presupposing it, or make do without presupposing it, and still have a philosophy, a psychology, and a culture?

Just like Kierkegaard, as we have seen in chapter 3, Heidegger regards not only anxiety but also the moods in general as a presupposition. They are, as he writes, “the ‘presupposition’ for, and ‘medium’ of thinking and acting” (“die ‘Voraussetzung’ und das ‘Medium’ des Denkens und Handelns”; FCM 68 / 102). Heidegger makes ample use of such presuppositions. One may even say that they constitute the “life-world” (*Lebenswelt*) of his systematic philosophizing. He would philosophize about almost everything, from Christian dogmas, through art and poetry, to skiing.¹ But in doing so, and inasmuch as he remains committed to the main claims of *Being and Time*, he methodically refrains from *making* presuppositions.² Unlike the “positive,” or “ontic,” sciences—a category under which Heidegger includes, at a certain point, even theology—philosophy does not have a “*positum*” (PT 41ff. / 48ff.). Scientific observation is based on relating to things as if they were “present at hand” (*vorhanden*), which is the relation that enables objectification, thematization, and theorization, and that differentiates the human being from the animal. Heidegger’s philosophy is an effort to counteract the “forgetfulness of being” (*Seinsvergessenheit*) that is involved according to

¹ The case of skiing is mentioned in Löwith, *Mein Leben*, 33.

² BT 358 / 310): “Philosophy will never seek to deny its ‘presuppositions,’ but neither may it simply admit them. It conceives them, and it unfolds with more and more penetration both the presuppositions themselves and that for which they are presuppositions.” [Philosophie wird ihre ‘Voraussetzungen’ nie abstreiten wollen, aber auch nicht bloß zugeben dürfen. Sie begreift die Voraussetzungen, und bringt in eins mit ihnen das, wofür sie Voraussetzungen sind, zu eindringlicherer Entfaltung.] As Deleuze remarks at the outset of the chapter on “The Image of Thought” in *Difference and Repetition* (129), “The same attitude [i.e., the attitude that is also to be found in Descartes, Hegel, and others] of refusing objective presuppositions, but on condition of assuming just as many subjective presuppositions (which are perhaps the same ones in another form), appears when Heidegger invokes a pre-ontological understanding of Being.”

him (and as specifically prescribed by the method of *epoché*) in this mode of observation. Heidegger explores the very *tendency* to make presuppositions and that which is *indicated* (*angezeigt*) by the presuppositions of theology, the other ontic sciences, and average everydayness. But the purpose of his philosophizing is not to affirm existing presuppositions or to make new ones.

However, deeming Heidegger's choice to elaborate on anxiety in *Being and Time* a matter worthy of interpretation entails the assumption that Heidegger's choice of themes and presuppositions from which or about which to philosophize is not simply a matter of whim. He himself never explains in *Being and Time* why out of all possible basic moods, he chooses to focus in this text or time period on anxiety, rather than any other basic mood.³ My interpretation is based on the suspicion that anxiety enters the analysis of Dasein as, so to speak, a "ready-made" concept, a mood whose fundamental status has already been established, or ascertained, if not presupposed. I have accordingly suggested that anxiety is introduced into this text as the mood of Heidegger's "anticipatory resolution" to repeat the question of being and the teachings of his ancient, scholastic, and modern predecessors, especially Kierkegaard.

In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, on the other hand, instead of *repeating* the teachings of his predecessors, Heidegger *reacts* to the work of his contemporaries, to the intellectual debates of the day in the fields of philosophical anthropology, cultural philosophy, and experimental and theoretical biology. Boredom

³ The notion of fear is rather abruptly introduced into the otherwise continuous analysis of affectedness (*Befindlichkeit*) in the fourth chapter of the first division (179 / 140), where only two reasons for the introduction of this topic are mentioned: in order to "illustrate" (*demonstrieren*) the "phenomenon of affectedness"; and "in consideration of" the interpretation of the closely related phenomenon of anxiety which is undertaken in §40, just before the notion of care (*Sorge*) is introduced. Likewise, Heidegger begins his interpretation of the phenomenon of anxiety (228 / 184) by explaining to what extent it is a "distinctive state of mind" (*ausgezeichnete Befindlichkeit*), but without saying why he chooses to discuss this rather than other distinctive states of mind.

itself is invoked in the lecture course as the “fundamental mood that thoroughly governs our contemporary situation” (*die unsere Lage durchherrschende Grundstimmung*; 96 / 103), as well as in direct and specific reaction to “four interpretations of our contemporary situation” (by Max Scheler, Ludwig Klages, Oswald Spengler, and Leopold Ziegler). In contrast to the anxiety of *Being and Time*, whose introduction remains unaccounted for, boredom is introduced into the inquiry in a long process of “awakening.” In fact, the entire analysis of boredom is titled by Heidegger, “Awakening a Fundamental Attunement in Our Philosophizing” (“Die Weckung einer Grundstimmung unseres Philosophierens”)—awakening as opposed to ascertaining (*Feststellung*), and as implying that what is awakened, unlike, for example, a stone, is a thing that can be asleep in the first place (62 / 93; cf. 23 / 34). At no point in the analysis of boredom is boredom ascertained, yet it is specified and expansively and consistently worked out with almost no reference to other basic moods.⁴ Thus the entire analysis of boredom, as well as some parts of the preceding “Preliminary Appraisal” (*Vorbetrachtung*), is an attempt to justify the specification of the fundamental mood that “pervades us” in the “contemporary situation” in terms of boredom. To this end, Heidegger mentions the tediousness of academia (1 / 2), the boredom in the lecture hall (12 / 18), the boredom inflicted by the fashionable cultural interpretations of the day (§18)—until at a certain point he states that boredom “is already awake” and therefore “does not need to be awakened,” the task instead being: “*letting it be awake, guarding against it falling asleep*” (“*Wachsein lassen, vor dem Einschlafen behüten*”; 79 / 118).

⁴ Notable exceptions are homesickness (*Heimweh*; 5 / 7, 80 / 120) and melancholy (*Schwermut*; 79 / 119ff., cf. 183 / 270).

What remains largely unaccounted for in the analysis of boredom, as we have seen, is, perhaps most specifically and conspicuously, its relation to anxiety,⁵ and, more generally, the absence of themes whose intrinsic relation to anxiety Heidegger works out in detail in *Being and Time*: guilt, conscience, falling, death, and the possibility of inauthenticity. I have suggested that Heidegger's concept of boredom be understood as a secularized version of his concept of anxiety, and that a longer line of continuity be drawn running in the direction of secularization from Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety, which is worked out as the presupposition of original sin, though Heidegger's concept of anxiety, which is worked out in intentional disregard of the possibility of sin, to boredom, which involves no sin, guilt, or fear. But aside from the absence of sin and guilt, the very attention to the thematics of philosophical anthropology already suggests a movement in the direction of secularization. For the emergence of philosophical anthropology itself is an expression of a shift of focus from the being of God to the being of human beings. And though it is clear that Dasein is the kind of being that humans are, it is likewise clear that, at least in *Being and Time*, Dasein is also a means for Heidegger to avoid using the term *Mensch*.⁶ In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, by contrast, Heidegger

⁵ Heidegger nonetheless makes a revealing comment upon announcing that boredom is awake (79 / 118: "it is easier to wake someone up by startling them than to guard against them falling asleep." ["daß es leichter ist, jemanden durch einen Schock aufzuwecken."])

⁶ Dasein is the being that "we ourselves" are (36 / 15, 241 / 196), the being whose being is "always already mine" (68 / 42), the being to "which we call 'man'" (241 / 196), and the being that is referred to in the sentence (32 / 11): "As ways in which man can behave, sciences have the manner of being which this entity—man himself—possesses." ["Wissenschaften haben als Verhaltungen des Menschen die Seinsart dieses Seienden (Mensch)."] "This entity," says Heidegger in the next sentence, "we denote by the term 'Dasein.'" ["Dieses Seiende fassen wir terminologisch als *Dasein*."] If one follows the reference to the previous sentence in the translation, one finds "man himself." ("... this entity—man himself—possesses.") In the German text, however, the sense is that the specification "*Mensch*" is supposed to be covered: neither is it emphasized through the addition of the reflective pronoun "himself," nor is it separated by dashes; rather, it is put in parenthesis. It thus merely silently serves the function of clarifying the yet additional reference that Heidegger makes in this sentence to the being that may behave in a scientific way. The cumbersome constructions and chain of indexicals clearly show that in *Being and Time* Heidegger refrains

repeatedly asks, “Was ist der Mensch?”, reiterating this question at the outset as well as towards the end of the text (see e.g., 4 / 6, 5 / 7, 280-2 / 406-9, 285 / 413), and, at some point, he even asserts: “Our question: What is metaphysics? has transformed itself into the question: What is man?” [“Unsere Frage: Was ist Metaphysik?, hat sich gewandelt zur Frage: Was ist der Mensch?”] (7 / 10).⁷ The second part of the lecture course is famously dedicated to a “comparative consideration” (*vergleichende Betrachtung*) of man in relation to animals, plants, and inanimate objects.

In this regard, too, there is a sense in which Heidegger *continues* rather than just follows the movement of secularization. His philosophical anthropology is not anthropocentric, as some tend to think,⁸ and his psychology is not egocentric, as is also commonly believed⁹—which is why his refusal to qualify his philosophy in such “ontic” terms is ultimately justified. In spite of what Heidegger says in his Letter on ‘Humanism,’¹⁰ his philosophy *should* be understood in terms of secularization—just as it should be understood, in spite of his dismissive remarks towards Kierkegaard, precisely in light of his appropriation of Kierkegaard. But in accordance with what Heidegger says in that text, his philosophy should *not* be understood as a kind of humanism. It is, rather,

from employing the term “man.” For why not simply say that it is man himself who is denoted by the term “Dasein”? And if this can indeed be said, why call this entity “Dasein”?

⁷ On the general preoccupation with the question “What is man?” in the Weimar era and the specific significance of philosophical anthropology in Heidegger’s debate with Cassirer in Davos in March 1929 and later, see Gordon, *Continental Divide*, 69-77, 358-364.

⁸ David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 121. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 45. For a critical discussion of this interpretation of Heidegger’s notion of the animal’s “poverty in world,” see Mulhall, *Philosophical Myths*, 70-84.

⁹ For a discussion of this “familiar accusation” (often motivated by Heidegger’s characterization of being in *Being and Time* as “always already mine,” *Jemeinigkeit*; 78 / 53), see Robert Bernasconi, “‘The Double Concept of Philosophy’ and the Place of Ethics in *Being and Time*,” *Research in Phenomenology* 18 (1988): 41-57; as well as Lawrence Vogel, *The Fragile “We”: Ethical Implications of Heidegger’s “Being and Time”* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994).

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Pathmarks* 249ff. / 327ff.

a kind of post-humanism, an attempt, Nietzschean in spirit, to overcome not sinfulness but humanness.

The “question: What is metaphysics? has transformed itself,” in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, “into the question: What is man?” But the question “What is man?” has also transformed itself, though less explicitly: into the question “What is boredom?”¹¹ For though profound boredom sometimes appears to have the individualizing effect that anxiety is frequently ascribed to in *Being and Time*, the purpose of Heidegger’s interpretation of boredom is not to ascertain the identity of the individual, but to better understand the essence of boredom itself. Likewise, the goal of the comparative consideration in the second part of the lecture course is not to affirm the superiority of humans over animals and stones, but to answer the question, “What is world?” (see FCM 251 / 169).

In order to see in what sense this philosophical concern is a continuation, or even a radicalization, of a secularizing movement, let us consider it in Spinozist terms. Rather than the being of God, the one and only substance in Spinoza’s metaphysical system (E1p14), or the being of human bodies and souls, which are finite modes (E1p11, E2p48d, E3p2s), and which, among other modes—whether immediate infinite, mediate infinite, or finite (E1pp21-23, E1p23d)—are the “affections of substance” (E1d5), Heidegger is concerned with the *affections of the affections of substance*, i.e., with the affects.¹² These are defined by Spinoza, once, as “affections [*affectiones*] of the body by

¹¹ FCM 62 / 93 (emphasis added): “The awakening of attunement, and the attempt to broach this strange task, in the end *coincide* with the demand for a complete transformation of our conception of man.” [“Das Wecken der Stimmung und der Versuch, sich an dieses Merkwürdige heranzuarbeiten, *fällt* am Ende *zusammen* mit der Forderung einer völligen Umstellung unserer Auffassung vom Menschen.”]

¹² Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 146.

which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and... the ideas of these affections"; and, once again, as "confused idea[s] by which the mind affirms of its body, or of some part of it, a greater or lesser force of existing than before, which, when it is given, determines the mind to think of this rather than that."¹³

Spinoza primarily criticizes religiosity for its anthropocentrism,¹⁴ which is expressed, *inter alia*, in the tendency to project onto God the feelings of humans. In opposition to this tendency, he asserts, "God is without passions, and is not affected with any affect of joy or sadness" (E5p17); as well as, "God loves no one, and hates no one" (E5p17c). In technical terms, this translates into saying that while it is possible to consider God as affected by certain modifications (E1p28d), it is a mistake to consider God as affected by second-order modifications. More specifically, unlike those modes that can be regarded as *direct* affections of substance—which are mostly discussed in Parts I and II of the *Ethics*, and include human minds and bodies and other finite and infinite adequate ideas,¹⁵ along with their corresponding manifestations in the attribute of extension¹⁶—the affections of humans (discussed in Parts III-V of the *Ethics*), both bodily and mentally, and especially those that are called passions, which occur in perfect

¹³ E3d3; "General Definition of the Affects" (196-97).

¹⁴ E1app: "All the prejudices I here undertake to expose depend on this one: that men commonly suppose that all natural things act, as men do, on account on an end; indeed, they maintain as certain that God himself directs all things to some certain end, for they say that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God."

¹⁵ Such as the idea of God (*idea Dei*), "absolute infinite intellect" (*intellectus absolute infinitus*), "understanding" (*Verstaan*), or, arguably, the laws of nature. See E1p21d; Letter 64 (29 July 1675) in Curley, *Spinoza Reader*, 271; Samuel Shirley (trans.), *Spinoza: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), 919; Abraham Wolf (trans. and ed.), *Spinoza's Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (London: A. and C. Black, 1910), 57; *Korte verhandeling van God, de mensch en deszelvs welstand* 1:9 in Carl Gebhardt (ed.), *Spinoza Opera*, vol. 1. (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1925), 48; and Yirmiyahu Yovel, "The Infinite Mode and Natural Laws in Spinoza," in Yirmiyahu Yovel (ed.), *God and Nature: Spinoza's Metaphysics (Spinoza by 2000: The Jerusalem Conferences, vol. I)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 79-96.

¹⁶ Such as "the face of the whole universe" (*facies totius universi*; Letter 64 (29 July 1675) in Curley, *Spinoza*, 272; Shirley, *Spinoza*, 919), or "motion" (*Beweginge*) or "motion and rest" (Spinoza, *Korte verhandeling* I:9, II:19 in Gebhardt, *Spinoza*, vol. 1, 48, 89-90; Wolf, *Spinoza's*, 47, 120).

correspondence in the body and in the mind,¹⁷ should not be regarded as direct affections of substance, but only as *indirect, secondary* ones.¹⁸ That God loves and hates no one means that God does not have affections in the same sense in which humans have affects, that, although God is affected in many ways, God does not “feel” as we do. Or in other words, that we are confused does not imply that nature itself is confused.

Yet there is confusion in nature. Dedicating Parts 3-4 of the *Ethics* to the study of the affect, defining them individually¹⁹ and (twice) in common, Spinoza expresses a commitment not only to the view that the affects exist, but also to the view that they exist in precisely the same sense in which God exists, i.e., in the sense that they are all in nature. For in opposition to Descartes, who states that, “the term ‘substance’ does not apply *univocally*, as they say in the Schools, to God and to other things,”²⁰ Spinoza, as Deleuze explains, subscribes to the principle of “univocal being,” according to which, “Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said.”²¹ This also means that, even though the passions are inherently confused, they have essence. For

¹⁷ By E3p2s (mind-body parallelism): “the order of actions and passions of our body is, by nature, at one with the order of actions and passions of the mind.”

¹⁸ Spinoza appears to contradict both himself and what is here suggested when in E5pp35-6 he states that, “God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love,” and that, “The mind’s intellectual love of God is the very love of God by which God loves himself,” as well as when he writes in the corollary to the latter proposition that, “inasmuch as God loves himself, he loves men, and... God’s love of men and the mind’s intellectual love of God are one and the same.” But all this is said inasmuch as things are considered under the species of eternity. It is only the intellectual love of God which is “eternal” (E5p34c) and, as such, it is different from all the other affects, which are experienced only as long as one’s body endures. The intellectual love of God is therefore indistinguishable from God’s love of himself to the same extent that the intellectual and emotional aspects of this love are indistinguishable from each other; but love *as a passion*, i.e., as something ephemeral which involves confusion, is only ascribable to finite beings.

¹⁹ In a list of forty-eight definitions of the affects, presented towards the end of Part 3 of the *Ethics*.

²⁰ Descartes, *Principles*, 210.

²¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36, 40; Cf. Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 332.

otherwise they would be indefinable, and Spinoza, of course, defines them systematically.²²

In this regard, I would like to suggest, Heidegger and Spinoza are alike—in spite of the apparent differences between the former’s phenomenological hermeneutics and the latter’s geometrical method (cf. FCM 302 / 437). Both of them consider the passions in ontological terms and thus conceive of them as entities or phenomena in their own right rather than as merely that which makes the human individual human or an individual. Likewise, both of them hold that the passions are autonomous, that only through a feeling can a feeling be changed—not through actions and not through adequate ideas.²³ This implies that the passions have their own history, as something that is different from, but complementary to, both the history of actions (political history) and the history of adequate ideas (history of science, intellectual history). Not only does the history of secularization have an emotional aspect, which I propose to understand as a transition from anxiety to boredom, but also the very study of the passions, not merely as qualifiers of God, or as qualifiers of human beings, but in their own right, is an aspect of secularization, another step leading not from God to humans, but from humans to that which makes them humans, and yet *not only inasmuch as* it makes them humans—i.e., to an anthropology that is neither anthropocentric nor logocentric.²⁴

²² Cf. E3p4d: “For the definition of any thing affirms, and does not deny, the thing’s essence, *or* it posits the thing’s essence, and does not take it away.” See also E1p8s2i-ii; E1p16d; E3da6; *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, §95, in Shirley, *Spinoza*, 25; Letter 34 in Shirley, *Spinoza*, 854.

²³ Spinoza, E4p7: “An affect cannot be restrained or taken away except by an affect opposite to, and stronger than, the affect to be restrained.” [“Affectus nec coerceri nec tolli potest, nisi per affectum contrarium et fortiolem affectu coercendo.”] Heidegger, BT 175 / 136: “when we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood.” [“Herr werden wir der Stimmung nie stimmungslös, sondern je aus einer Grundstimmung.”]

²⁴ This may explain what Heidegger says in the footnote from *Being and Time* discussed in Chapter 2 (492 / 192):

Part two of this dissertation shows that another project of secularization, Freud's psychoanalysis, has contributed to what can now be described as the "reification of anxiety," that is, to the process whereby anxiety has indeed become a thing in late modernity—most clearly in the form of a "disease entity," or "clinical entity," that is, a diagnostic category, and one which is widely used, named by Freud "anxiety neurosis," but mostly known today as "anxiety disorder." Unlike Spinoza and Heidegger, however, Freud is interested in anxiety and in the emotions in general *only* inasmuch as they color the experience of the human individual. Its secularizing impetus notwithstanding, his account, which is logocentric in that it subordinates emotions to ideas and repression to reason, also remains both egocentric, in that it asserts that the "ego is the sole seat of anxiety," and anthropocentric, in that it emphasizes the phylogenetic origins of anxiety.

Despite Freud's admiration for Brentano, his plans to become a zoologist-philosopher, and the close affinities between his thinking and the thinking of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, his atheism appears to coincide with a general not only anti-metaphysical but also anti-philosophical inclination. Complementary to Heidegger,

It is no accident that the phenomena of anxiety and fear... have come within the purview of Christian theology ontically and even (though within very narrow limits) ontologically. This has happened whenever the anthropological problem of man's being towards God has won priority and when questions have been formulated under the guidance of phenomena like faith, sin, love, and repentance.

[Es ist kein Zufall, daß die Phänomene von Angst und Furcht... ontisch und auch, obzwar in sehr engen Grenzen, ontologisch in den Gesichtskreis der christlichen Theologie kamen. Das geschah immer dann, wenn das anthropologische Problem des Seins des Menschen zu Gott einen Vorrang gewann und Phänomene wie Glaube, Sünde, Liebe, Reue die Fragestellung leiteten.]

Along such lines, that is, the narrative line that proceeds in the direction of secularization leading from God, through humans, to the post-human, one may also understand the more general focus in philosophical anthropology on the nature of the passions, exemplified primarily not by the work of Heidegger but by that of Max Scheler, an immediate and acknowledged source of influence on Heidegger in his development of his concept of *Befindlichkeit* in *Being and Time* (178 / 139) and of his phenomenology of moods in general. See also GA 26: 164ff.

he draws a sharp distinction between psychology and philosophy,²⁵ constructing the edifice of psychoanalysis in blatant disregard of questions about the reality of an external world, an internal ego, or other minds, about the unity of the subject, or even about the duality of mind and body—questioning instead only the assumption that people actually mean what they appear to say. Likewise, Freud does not avoid presuppositions, but *proceeds* in his theorizing precisely by way of *making* presuppositions—which he calls, as we have seen in chapter 5 of this thesis, his “latest conclusions.”²⁶ Also in stark contrast to Heidegger, Freud’s point of departure is not normalcy but pathology. He is interested primarily not in the everyday as such, but in the *psychopathology* of the everyday, with the *deviations* from the normal, however small or insignificant they may appear to be. Accordingly, the task that he sets himself in his 1917 lecture on anxiety (393) is not to explain why people generally suffer from anxiety or what anxiety as such is, but “why neurotics in particular suffer from anxiety so much more and so much more strongly than other people.”

Freud is primarily interested in anxiety only insofar as it qualifies the experience of the human individual *and* appears as a *psychopathological* phenomenon. But in his psychopathology, alongside volition and action, he gives precedence to logos over pathos. This is why he develops his theory of anxiety in the framework of a therapeutics whose primary aim is not to alleviate pain, but to help the patients to overcome the dissociative forces of repression, so as to regain self-coherence or self-integrity, understood primarily as coherence and integrity of ideas, and not as harmony of the passions. Surely, emotional relief is anticipated, but only as the product of the association

²⁵ For assertions by Freud to this effect, see “From the History,” 105-106; “Two Encyclopaedia Articles,” SE 18: 253-54; and “The Question of Lay Analysis,” SE 20: 191.

²⁶ Freud, “Psycho-Analysis,” SE 20: 266 / GW 14: 303.

of ideas—just as the unpleasurable tension is conceived of as merely the effect of ideational dissociation. Evidently, Freud does not subscribe to the view that feelings are only changed through feelings; it is actions performed on (adequate) ideas that change feelings.

The privileging of logos over pathos is also the reason why, while ideas are considered real entities, a matter for association, repression, and interpretation, emotions are regarded as formless energetic magnitudes commonly and interchangeably referred to as “affects,” “energy,” “quanta of excitation,” “instinctual impulses,” or “cathexes.” When they are positive, they generally assume the form of love; anxiety is that to which they all transform when they become negative. But these latter apparently essential designations, love and anxiety, as well as the logic of the transformability of the former into the latter, find their origin in theology.²⁷

As we have seen in chapters 4-5, Freud’s discovery that anxiety is prior to repression, as well as his consequent repudiation of his theory of anxiety as repressed libido, is tied with the idea that “the ego is the sole seat of anxiety” and that “the ego alone can produce and feel anxiety.”²⁸ But Freud never explains how precisely, if not by repression, the ego produces or feels anxiety, or what the difference between these two mental operations is. One may expect that the death drive, specifically designed to

²⁷ “Unquestionably,” writes Augustine, “the only cause for fear lies in the fact that what is loved might be lost, once acquired, or might not be required, once hoped for.” [“nulli dubium est non aliam metuendi esse causam, nisi ne id quod amamus aut adeptum amittamus aut non adipiscamur speratum.”] Question 33: “On Fear” in *Eighty-three Different Questions* in Hermigild Dressler et al. (eds.), *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1982), 62; *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), question 33, line 1. See A. W. Hunzinger, *Das Furchtproblem in der katholischen Lehre von Augustin bis Luther* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1906); Heidegger, “Augustine and Neoplatonism” (1921 lecture course), in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), §§12, 16; *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, GA 60, 1995, §§12, 16; and HCT 285 / 393-94.

²⁸ Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, SE 22: 85 / GW 15: 91; cf. *The Ego and the Id*, SE 19: 57 / GW 13: 287; and ISA 109 / 138.

address, *inter alia*, the economic problem of anxiety dreams (BPP 32), is the concept on the basis of which the general mechanism of anxiety should be explained. But the fact is that Freud himself does not resort to this explanation in *Inhibition, Symptoms, and Anxiety* or elsewhere. As we have seen in chapter 4, this is so simply because, as Freud reminds us in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* (132), “anxiety... is in the first place something that is felt.” That is, rather than an act or an adequate idea, anxiety is a passion. And instead of questioning the tradition of privileging action and reason over passion, as does Heidegger, Freud reinforces this tradition.

Thus the death drive primarily explains aggression, auto and hetero, but not, at least not directly, the generation of anxiety, its mechanism.²⁹ While repression is conceived of as an act of dissociation and an intentional operation of the psyche regarding which an explanation must first and foremost be given on the ontogenetic level—at least until all explanatory resources at this level are “exhausted” (*erschöpft*)³⁰—the intentionality of anxiety is never systematically worked out, nor even is it asserted, unless in subordination to the intentionality of repression, and no account of the mechanism whereby anxiety is ontogenetically generated is provided. Rather, regarding anxiety, Freud makes the opposite point, articulated by way of dissent from Otto Rank’s theory of the trauma of birth, that “To lay so much stress... on the variability in the strength of the birth trauma is to leave no room for the legitimate claims of hereditary constitution as an aetiological factor” (ISA 151). Although “the ego is the sole seat of anxiety,” and although it “alone can produce and feel anxiety,” the explanation of

²⁹ See BPP 52-55; *Civilization*, SE 21: 118-122.

³⁰ Freud, “From the History,” SE 17: 97 / GW 12: 131.

anxiety, and of the affects in general, is to be sought after not in the history of the individual, but in that of the species.³¹

Following this reasoning, psychoanalysis carries out precisely the “task” that Vigilius Haufniensis sets himself in *The Concept of Anxiety* (9). It exemplifies the dual sense of this task as it is specified in the subtitle of this book’s introduction: “The sense in which the subject of our deliberation is a task of psychological interest and the sense in which, after having been the task and interest of psychology, it points directly to dogmatics.” The psychoanalytic theory of anxiety at once asserts that the ego is the sole seat of anxiety and points directly to dogmatics, to the hysteria and history of the species, collective trauma, and the art of making presuppositions.

³¹ See Freud, “Anxiety,” SE 16: 395-96.

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Curriculum Vitae

I was born and grew up in Jerusalem, Israel. I received a BA degree in history and an MA degree in German studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, before entering the PhD program in intellectual history in the Humanities Center at Johns Hopkins, Baltimore. I presented portions of this dissertation in various national and international conferences, including a meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association in Boston, a meeting of the Psychoanalysis Reading Group at Princeton University, a conference entitled “Freud Today” at the Freud Museum in Vienna, and a conference entitled “Phenomenology and Mind” at the New School for Social Research in New York. My research focuses on issues in the history, philosophy, and sociology of emotions. At Johns Hopkins, I have designed and taught a variety of courses in philosophy and intellectual history.